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# HESPEROS:

OR,

# TRAVELS IN THE WEST.

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VOL. II.

# HESPEROS:

OR,

# TRAVELS IN THE WEST.

BY

MRS. HOUSTOUN,

AUTHOR OF "TEXAS, AND THE GULF OF MEXICO."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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# CONTENTS

OF

# THE SECOND VOLUME.

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LETTER XXV.

PAGE

Steam-boat disasters—The causes of such accidents—On board the 'Ben Franklin' en route for Louisville—Impertinence of a *white* stewardess—American honeymoons—Heavy fall of snow—Arrival at Louisville—An uninviting 'city'—Embark in the 'Leonora' . . . . . 1

LETTER XXVI.

Emigrant and deck passengers—Running aground—Travelled Americans — Low rate of fares — Refractory mules—Steam-boat sharpers—'La Belle Rivière'—Ohio boatmen—Floating in — Melancholy catastrophe — Dinners on board the 'Leonora' . . . . . 17

LETTER XXVII.

Pass Cairo—Enter the Mississippi—Public opinion—Landing at Memphis—Description of the Mississippi—'Western men' at the wooding places—Vicksburg—Thick fogs—Touch at Natchez—Arrival at New Orleans . . . . 41

LETTER XXVIII.

St. Louis Hotel — Duels in the South — Improvement in manners and customs—Lynch-law—Description of the city—*Country* rides—New Orleans races—Negro jockeys, 56

LETTER XXIX.

PAGE

Italian Opera—Quadroon ball—Marriages with the coloured people—Sale of Quadroon girl—Mr. Clay—Episcopal church at New Orleans—Eloquence of the preacher . . 79

LETTER XXX.

Interesting public speech—Stump orations—'Peter Parley'—Prospect of war—Alarm of the slave-owners—Disinclination of the upper classes to engage in hostilities with England . . . . . 83

LETTER XXXI.

Monsieur de T—u—Departure for Texas—Voyage down the river—Rough passage to Galveston—Arrival and reception there—Disgust of the French 'nobleman'—Last President of the country—The ex-President Houston—Wretched condition of the emigrants—Tremont Hotel—Episcopal church—German emigrant—Some account of the State of Texas . . . . . 95

LETTER XXXII.

Expedition to New Washington—Domestic life up the country—Unhealthy mode of life—The German geologist—The sugar country—A dinner engagement in the prairie—Distressing situation of the man of science . . 114

LETTER XXXIII.

Prairie visit—New settlers—Cheerful negro household—Rifle shooting—Pretty scenery—The Doctor deserts the party—Return to New Washington—Adventure in the prairie—Return to Galveston—Crowded state of the hotel—Voyage to New Orleans . . . . . 130

LETTER XXXIV.

PAGE

Female Quaker's oration — Templeton's concert — Louis Philippe's house—Slave quarter—Departure for a sugar plantation—Country house on the Mississippi—Description of sugar making—Condition of the negroes—Deplorable absence of religious instruction—Return to the city—Carnival at New Orleans . . . . . 149

LETTER XXXV.

Atrocities committed on the distant plantations—Departure for the Mexican Archipelago—The *Dîme* steamboat—Difficulties of the navigation—Island of Barataria—Don Ribiera—Life on the islands—The murdered overseer—Selina—Leave Barataria for another plantation . . . 164

LETTER XXXVI.

More about the blacks—Voyage among the islands—Immense slaughter of alligators—A mid-day meal in the woods—Exquisite scenery—Mosquitoes—Gaily dressed Indians—Extreme hospitality of the southern planters—Battlefield of New Orleans . . . . . 181

LETTER XXXVII.

Melancholy mental condition of the negroes—African blockade—Colony of Liberia—Advantages and disadvantages of slavery in America—Difficulty of making the blacks perform any actual labour—Miseries they undergo in the free States — Chances of abolition — Injudicious interference of Great Britain . . . . . 195

LETTER XXXVIII.

New constitution for the State of Louisiana—Mr. McDonogh—New Orleans Theatre—'The Merry Wives of Windsor'—Departure for New Orleans — Insane passenger — The 'planter's lady'—German musicians—Tremendous storm—Hacket, the comedian—Cross the Alleghanies—Maple sugar—Gadsby's hotel . . . . . 214

LETTER XXXIX.

PAGE

The 'Capitol'—Description of the Senate Chamber and House of Representatives—John Quincy Adams—President Polk—American Newspapers—Evening party at the 'White House' . . . . . 228

LETTER XL.

Departure for Washington—Author of 'Highways and Byeways'—Institution for the blind at Boston—An iceberg—A wreck discovered—Pleasant voyage—Arrival at Liverpool . . . . . 241

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APPENDIX . . . . . 249

# HESPEROS:

OR,

# TRAVELS IN THE WEST.

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## LETTER XXV.

STEAM-BOAT DISASTERS — THE CAUSES OF SUCH ACCIDENTS — ON BOARD THE 'BEN FRANKLIN,' EN ROUTE FOR LOUISVILLE—IMPERTINENCE OF A WHITE STEWARDESS — AMERICAN HONEY-MOONS — HEAVY FALL OF SNOW — ARRIVAL AT LOUISVILLE — AN UNINVITING 'CITY'—EMBARK IN THE 'LEONORA.'

*On board the 'Leonora,' on the Ohio—November.*

THE 'Ben Franklin' had, like all the American steam-boats, high pressure engines, and therefore, as some sort of security, there were *life preservers* hung up in every state room, and a talk of accidents, past, present, and to come, was in every one's mouth. We were assured, (and the intimation *appeared* given in kindness, and with the intention, as we thought, of relieving our fears,) that *only* ten steamers had been lost on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, within the last month! Various

causes exist for the numerous disasters; the principal one arises from a mistaken idea of economy which prompts the owners of the vessels to delay the putting in of *new* boilers, till long after they have become absolutely useless from old age, and the consequent thinness of the iron. When arrived at this stage of incapacity for their work, the boiler frequently explodes, generally without a moment's warning; and the consequence is, that the life of every soul on board is often sacrificed to the cupidity of one pennywise individual. Another, and not an unusual cause of accidents, arises from the temerity, or rather roguery of the (so called) engineer. I have already mentioned the wonderful *'cuteness* for which these people are remarkable, and also the rapidity with which they seem to acquire a knowledge of any business or profession in which they intend to embark; thus it happens that, on these great western waters, many a man who has acquired no further knowledge of a steam-engine than that which can be picked up by acting as *stoker* for a voyage or two, passes himself off as a first-rate engineer, and risks the lives of hundreds of human beings by his unprincipled duplicity.

The *snags* and *sawyers*, which, though every effort is made to keep them down, are constantly rearing their treacherous heads an inch or so above the water, and threatening destruction to life and

property, claim a conspicuous place in the catalogue of river dangers. The thick fogs, too, which sometimes hardly clear up for days together, are a fruitful source of danger, causing collision with other rapidly steaming boats, running ashore, and all kinds of mishaps. Last, but not least, the unfortunate habit which prevails, of every passenger rushing to the same side of the vessel directly she touches the landing, ought to be mentioned. This simultaneous movement, by its causing her to lug over on one side, causes more explosions than can easily be believed, and, as a proof of it, I may mention that accidents of this description occur much more frequently close to the landings, than they do elsewhere.

I have already told you that the steamer was very crowded, and also that the company was none of the best; nevertheless, there was one party on board as different from the rest of the society as elegance of manner and refinement of feeling could possibly make them. We soon found that we were acquainted with some of their relations, and also that we had several mutual friends, so that the prospect of having such agreeable companions all the way down to New Orleans, made us look upon the voyage almost as a party of pleasure. There was also among the company a very agreeable Kentuckian, who was full of anecdotes and interesting tales of the early struggles

between the Whites and the Indians, on 'The Bloody Ground,' as a part of Kentucky is called.

Just as it was growing dusk we passed 'Big Bone Lick Creek,' near to which are some celebrated sulphur springs. It is here that the bones of that wondrous beast, the Mammoth, have been found of the greatest size and in the largest quantities. There is a curious tradition among the Delaware Indians, which, in their poetical idiom, would sound of course much better than I can repeat it to you. But here it is, as well as I can tell it.

The mammoths, according to the Delaware historical authorities, formerly existed in vast numbers, and their appetites being proportioned to their size, the ravages they made in the hunting-grounds of the red men caused them serious inconvenience and distress. Now, it happened that *Manitou*, the Great Spirit of the Indian tribes, looked with an eye of pity upon the misfortunes of the virtuous, but unfortunate Delawares, and determined to rid them of their foes. With his destructive lightning in his hand, he left his abiding place, and descended to a rock, near the haunts of the destructive mammoths. On that rock, the Great Spirit rested for awhile, and on its adamantine surface were pointed out the marks made by his feet, as he waited there for a favourable opportunity to pounce upon his victims. But soon the glancing

lightning darted among them, and the destructive bolts fell thick and fast. At length, the herd, (numerous as it was,) lay in dead heaps upon the plain, all except one monstrous bull, the leader and grandsire of the herd, who continued to present his broad, and iron forehead to the shafts, and to shake them off harmlessly as they fell; but the energy and foresight of this Napoleon of the mammoths failed him at last. One missile was unparried by his opposing front, and he fell, wounded in the side; but it was evident that the weapon was not yet in existence which was destined to put an end to the great champion of the mammoths. Up he rose from the blood-besprinkled plain, and waving his tail contemptuously at his foe, he bounded away. The Ohio was cleared with a spring; the Wabash and Illinois were left miles behind, and he never drew breath till he reached the Great Lakes, where he still lives and flourishes.

The Delawares have an idea that the mammoth was a beast of active habits, keen perceptions, and addicted to the devouring of animal food; but among the *Shawnee* Indians, where the organic remains of the huge monsters have likewise been discovered, the creature is thought to have been a slow, heavy, awkward, animal, very much resembling an overgrown hog, inasmuch as he had long hanging ears, and little miserable eyes, and was of a dirty mouse-colour. Moreover, they affirm that

he fed entirely upon vegetable food, particularly delighting in the luxury of soft wood, and sometimes eating up whole trees, root, branch, and trunk.

There was once, it is said, a *scientific* English traveller, who carried off bones out of the 'Big-bone Lick' by wagon-loads, and shipped them off to his native country. *He* declared that the mammoth was of the same species as the lion, and his account of the antediluvian animal is very amusing. He says, that 'His shoulder-blade was of the size of a *breakfast-table;* that he was sixty feet in length, and twenty-five feet in height; that his *figure* was magnificent,—his looks determined,—his gait stately,—and his voice tremendous. So much for the mammoth, and the legend of Big-bone Lick.

There was a most uncivil white stewardess on board the 'Ben Franklin,' with whom I *could* have showed myself very angry, if such an indulgence of my indignation would have done the slightest good, or procured us one of the many comforts of which we were in want. There was neither jug nor basin in my berth, no towels, or any, in short, of the appliances or means by which the most commonplace toilet is effected. In the desperation of the moment, I forgot I was on board the 'Republican Ben Franklin,' and called in a somewhat peremptory manner for the 'stewardess.' No reply of any kind was vouchsafed, so I went up to her,

and informed her, in civil terms, that I wanted basins, towels, and hot-water. I wish you could have seen the surprise that was depicted on every face, and the way in which (without moving from her rocking-chair) she ejaculated 'What say?' I repeated my request in my blandest manner, foreseeing that my demand, being evidently an unusual one, would occasion an expression of surprise at least, if nothing more. 'Well, that beats the Union!' said the stewardess, in reply. 'You *must* be dirty, I expect, to want to wash this time o' night. I guess you'll have to wait till morning, and then wash with the others, in the washing-room. You'll have to make haste though, and you'll have your turn right away, for only *three* can go in at once.' Oh, horror of horrors! A washing-room in an American steamer, and that steamer the 'Ben Franklin!' I saw directly in the obstinate eye of that spiteful stewardess, that both menaces and entreaties would be thrown away upon her. There was but one way of softening the wicked determination of leaving me to my fate to which she had arrived, and that was, the application of a little *soft sawder*. The form in which I administered it is one which I have scarcely known to fail. So without allowing her to work herself into a passion, I tried the universal panacea of a dollar, which soon cured her of her obstinacy, and procured me (after a few more ejaculations of wonder,

and inquiries if I wanted the things 'fixed right away') the possession of the coveted articles.

I had the curiosity, before I left the steamer, to look into the above-named 'washing-room,' the place where almost all my female fellow-passengers had performed their scanty ablutions. There stood the vaunted *three* basins, *there* the *one* towel, and, suspended against the wall, was *the* comb! Such a combination of horrors almost made me wish myself back again among the pigs of Cincinnati. The 'washing-room,' with all its disgusting details, was formerly invariably found in all the western steamers; but now—thanks to Mrs. Trollope and other writers, and to the rapid march of civilization—it is very rare to meet with these public places for ablution in the better class of vessels.

The cabins are very comfortable, and are provided with every article necessary for cleanliness, and, moreover, the beds are much broader, softer, and more endurable than they are apt to be on board any other kind of 'floating prison.'

It was about seven o'clock in the morning when we reached Louisville, and glad enough we were to leave the steamer, and the greater proportion of its occupants. Among them there was a newly-married couple, who were passing what appeared to be (without exaggeration) their 'treacle,' or rather their *molasses* 'moon,' with apparently great satisfaction to themselves. It is very usual for

happy brides and grooms to spend this interesting period of their married life on board one or other of the great steamers plying up or down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. To a stranger, and above all, to an Englishwoman, this habit seems both strange and indiscreet. Exhibitions of conjugal attentions are not generally agreeable to lookers-on, and however much the principal actors in the 'comedy of the Honeymoon' may, in the first burst of matrimonial zeal, glory in the possession of a devoted heart, and in the bliss of reciprocal affection, the saloon of a crowded steamer is not (at least in my opinion) the proper theatre for its display. A bride in America is quite a public spectacle, for immediately after the performance of the marriage ceremony, (which, by the way, is very little of a ceremony after all,) she comes forth into society in all her splendour; the richest ornaments which the *corbeille de mariage* can boast, are heaped upon her person, and instead of retiring from observation for a season, she remains 'in town,' and the day after she has become a wife, enters her 'parlour' in all her 'braverie,' to receive a perfect levee of friends and acquaintances, who, according to the rules of strict *etiquette*, pour in to offer their congratulations on the interesting occasion.

With *us*, who, as a people, (I mean the female half of it,) are generally fated through life to see

so much more of our husbands than falls to the lot of most American wives, I dare say that the suppression of honeymoon retirement would, on the whole, be a measure fraught with excellent policy. I am convinced that married lovers in England make most dangerous discoveries by dint of *boring* each other during their month of enforced seclusion; whereas they might, under more propitious and less trying circumstances, continue in their mutual and very desirable delusions for years to come. Still, with all its manifold disadvantages, I prefer our English plan to that adopted by the Americans. Talleyrand's famous advice of '*n'ayez pas de zêle*,' would be very properly addressed to American brides and Benedicks, for who can deny that it is (to speak mildly) in very bad taste to display, for the edification of a crowd of indifferent spectators, feelings which ought to be sacred to *one* alone, and this, as it appears to me, merely for the sake of showing to the world how very fond married people *can* be of one another—*for a fortnight?*

The snow was falling in large flakes, obscuring every object, and throwing a white mantle over the streets of the town, when we reached Louisville; it was, as I said before, seven o'clock in the morning—the most comfortless *arriving hour* that I know of. The dreary wintry light of day was just

beginning to break, and the freezing north wind was blowing keenly and bitingly through the streets, and particularly round the corners. After leaving the steamer, we toiled up a steep ascent, and through some wind-swept streets, which at that early hour were wretched in their snowy silence, and at last reached the hotel, and called for breakfast.

The Galt House was the name of our hotel, and it is associated in my mind with everything that is wretched, gloomy, and depressing. Not that there was anything really to complain of, or that the rooms were more comfortless, or the beefsteaks harder than usual; but we had not yet become accustomed to gritty corn-bread, which tasted and looked as if a straw bonnet had been hastily chopped up, and mixed with the usual quantity of *dough-doings:* nor was the aspect of the large half-furnished bed-room into which we were shown, and which had no better view from its windows than some red tiles, calculated to impress us with a favourable opinion of the place.

To our great dismay, we were told that there was no really good and first-class steamer at Louisville on her way to New Orleans. Plenty of bad ones—dozens of dangerous boats, all ready for explosion, with over-worked boilers, and loafing crews, but not one that could be depended on, as

at all likely to carry us in safety through the dangers we should have to encounter. This was despair indeed! Louisville appeared to us such a deplorable and desolate spot to be stranded upon; and moreover there was the chance of ice accumulating, and of the rivers becoming so low as to put a stop to navigation altogether for weeks, or perhaps months to come. In short, we saw everything *en noir*, (excepting the great white letters on the door, advising us, as usual, to beware of thieves, and which was the only thing, in fact, we had to read,) and we sat in this manner for hours, with the thick and heavy snow descending *without*, and *our* minds within kept in a most disagreeable state of suspense, and hardly conscious whether our hopes or fears were uppermost.

We were at last roused into exertion by one of our late pleasant companions in the 'Ben Franklin,' who had, in the most unselfish manner possible, and at the risk of losing his own passage, run up, and knocked with breathless haste at our door, to give us the welcome intelligence that the 'Leonora,' a first-rate steamer, had just touched at Louisville, and that if we set off to join her, without an hour's delay, we might be so fortunate as to secure a passage in her for New Orleans. I need not say that we required but little pressing, and that in almost as short a space of time as it

takes to write it, we were on our road to the steam-boat.

The first thing to do was to obtain a carriage, and then, as we found that we had half an hour to spare, to desire our black charioteer to drive us through the town, and also to one or two *stores* at which we were desirous of purchasing some materials for amusement during the long and monotonous voyage which we had before us. Our first visit was to a book-store, where we found, as we expected, all the newest and best European novels, selling for twenty-five *cents* each, about a shilling. Having selected about a dozen volumes of *light literature* to beguile the tedium of the way, we next repaired to a 'work-shop:' one of those stores where ladies lay in stocks of crochet-needles and purse-silk, and which are now to be found *almost* everywhere in the world. From the strange and out-of-the-way places in which I have met with 'Berlin patterns' and 'German wools,' I am convinced, that I should not now be surprised to find an embroidery shop in Lapland, or even in the dominions of Queen Pomaré. Having procured what we were in search of, we took a cursory view of the town, and after making all due allowances for the snow, and our somewhat jaundiced state of feeling, I am inclined to consider that we were justified in our indifferent opinion of

Louisville. The city looks dull and sleepy, the streets are very irregular, and the aspect of the whole place was infinitely less prosperous than that of any of the other large cities we had previously visited.

We saw no cause to regret that our stay at Louisville was limited to *one hour*, but hurried down joyfully to Portland, where the 'Leonora' was lying, at a distance of about two miles from the hotel. At Louisville are the *falls* of the Ohio, which, though they have much more the appearance of *rapids*, are sufficiently formidable to form an obstruction (and almost the only one) to the navigation of the Ohio. The obstacle, however, only exists when the river is in a very low state; and to obviate the necessity of transhipping merchandize from one vessel to another, (an operation which was formerly often necessary,) a canal has been constructed at an enormous expense from Louisville to Portland. This canal is of sufficient width for the largest steamers to pass through it, and throughout the greatest part of its extent has been cut out of the solid rock. The 'Leonora' is quite a new boat, and has a careful and attentive captain, and moreover, (and what is of still greater importance,) she draws but four feet of water. This, as the rivers are much more than usually low, is, as I am told, a most important circumstance, and one

which we shall, doubtless, very soon learn to appreciate at its proper value.

The 'Leonora' proved, on a nearer inspection, worthy of all the commendations that had been bestowed on her; we found that there were not a great many passengers, and also that very few of them were ladies. The party I have before alluded to, with ourselves, constituted almost the entire society in the 'ladies' saloon,' and as soon as I had (to use an American expression) *realized* the pleasant circumstances in which our fates had placed us, I began to look forward to the long and, in most cases, tiresome river voyage, with feelings of satisfaction of quite a novel description.

I have rarely felt more intense cold than that which we endured as we scrambled down the steep and rugged bank to the deck of the steamers. Ankle deep in snow, we struggled on to the slippery plank placed to facilitate our coming on board, and were at last rewarded for our exertions by finding ourselves in a warm and most comfortable saloon. The first thing necessary on these occasions is to choose one's 'state room,' as the berths are called. According to my experience, the great desideratum is to be as far *aft* as possible; the worst possible place being that next the paddle-box, where you have not only to suffer from incessant noise, but also from absence of light, and are, moreover, (in

case of *explosion*,) nearer to the post of danger. The next object of an experienced traveller is to lay hands on a rocking-chair, there being generally not more than two or three in the saloon, and every other seat being to the last degree uncomfortable. In ten minutes time from the moment of our embarking we were under weigh, and going at the rate of ten knots an hour. We have now been two days on board, and as I find there is an opportunity of sending off this long letter, I shall take advantage of it.

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## LETTER XXVI.

EMIGRANTS AND DECK PASSENGERS — RUNNING A-GROUND—TRAVELLED AMERICANS—LOW RATE OF FARES — REFRACTORY MULES — STEAMBOAT SHARPERS—'LA BELLE RIVIÈRE'—OHIO BOATMEN — FLOATING IN — MELANCHOLY CATASTROPHE—DINNERS ON BOARD THE 'LEONORA.'

*'Leonora' Steamer—November.*

I WISH I could give you an idea of our aquatic *drawing-room,* and our peculiar mode of life. The only discomfort of which I feel inclined to complain is the disagreeable heat of the *immediate* neighbourhood of the stove, and the intense cold when one is only three yards away from it. At the large *bow window* in the stern it is freezing hard, but the view from it is the only glimpse we catch of the outer world, so there, till we are fairly driven back by the cold, we generally ensconce ourselves. It is curious to watch the waters as they are cleft by our vessel in her rapid progress, and to see the *receding* of the trees, and the chance houses which disappear as suddenly as though we were gazing at them from a railroad carriage. And then every five or ten minutes we see other steamers

come swiftly by, with their 'snort, snort, snort!' and their rush along the water; and by the time a very few of these *stentorious* breathings have made themselves heard, the huge boat is far away up the stream, out of sight and hearing.

When evening closed in, our saloon had really a look of comfort; the warm red curtains were drawn round the stern window, and the hard pillowless circular sofa was exchanged for the rocking-chairs round the stove; and here we had amusements in the shape of 'books, and works, and *healthful play:*' our enjoyments in the latter species of pastime being, however, limited to an occasional game of vingt-et-un, with Peccan nuts taking the place of the current coin of the republic. The *Leonora* being so newly built, everything was neat and clean on board; a bright red carpet, of home manufacture, covered the deck, and nothing about it gave tokens of its having been *used* by the natives of the country.

We did not progress *very* expeditiously, and compared with the usual rate of distance made in an hour by these river steamers, (sixteen, eighteen, or twenty knots an hour being not at all uncommon,) our *eight* seemed very moderate. But as an excuse for our comparatively slow progress, I must tell you that great caution was required on the part of the captain to prevent our vessel running a-ground: it was evident that he preferred safety

to expedition, for he was constantly dwelling on the necessity of *feeling our way* instead of going recklessly a-head. The current runs with tremendous force, and once driven on a hidden bank, when going at full speed, it is a very difficult matter to get off again into deep water. We had a few bullocks on board, who were on their way to one of the large towns not very much above New Orleans, and the weight of which ponderous beasts contributed to sink us several inches lower in the water than we should otherwise have been. We had also some horses and mules, and a vast number of what are called 'deck passengers.' The latter consisted principally of emigrants from Ireland, *loafing* characters from the north, and German settlers with a very small amount of money in their pockets. The part of the vessel which they occupied was tenanted only by themselves, and the four-footed animals I have before-mentioned. It was exposed to all the inclemency of the season, and in the inclement weather which had set in their sufferings, particularly those of the women and children, were very severe.

When we left Louisville, we had rather more than fifteen hundred miles to travel on these giant rivers—the Ohio and the Mississippi, and the distance altogether from Brownsville to New Orleans is a voyage of only two or three hundred miles less than that across the Atlantic from

England. You will think that I speak very disrespectfully of a 'hundred miles, more or less,' but the truth is, that one grows very reckless of odd *hundreds* while calculating distances on this gigantic scale. The river voyage would (we were aware, notwithstanding the advantages of smooth water and high pressure engines) occupy a much longer space of time than we passed on the Atlantic passage. On the latter, as a set off to its head winds and giant waves, there are happily no *stopping places*, no taking in of fuel, and, more than all, no *running aground*. To the latter inconvenience, from its happening, on an average, three times a day, we soon became accustomed.

The snow, for the first few days, fell fast, often hiding the banks from our view, and (what *might* have been of much more consequence) preventing our seeing the approach of other vessels. During all this time, we were compelled to endure racking headaches from the pernicious fumes of the stoves, and to submit to close confinement in our own quarters, from the impossibility of allowing the door of the gentlemen's (?) saloon to be left open. *Their* amusements were truly those of the western world—namely, playing at cards with remarkably dirty packs, smoking cigars, using violent language, and drinking brandy, and other 'fancy cocktails,' from morning till night.

We often had three or four steamers meeting or

passing us at the same time, their decks generally crowded, and their loud *bellows*-like sound giving due warning of their approach. As I said before, in spite of all the precautions that were taken, we were very often stuck fast in the middle of the stream. On these occasions it often happened that the efforts to get our steamer afloat again were unsuccessful for hours together. We were always warned when our progress was about to be delayed in this unsatisfactory manner by a little peculiar quiver in the motion of the vessel; then there came a slight shock, and a universal cry of, 'Here we are, a ground again!' The first proceeding on these occasions was to let off the steam, and every possible measure was by turn resorted to in the hope of 'getting us off,' and into active motion once more. Incessantly rang the ship's bells for the working of either starboard or port paddle, as the case might be; but often and often all the measures tried were, for a length of time, ineffectual, and we lay till our patience was well nigh exhausted, a motionless log on the bosom of the waters.

The most approved mode of getting the steamer off, was by means of two or three large spars, pointed with iron, and about thirty feet long; these were stuck out on the shallow side, and extended well over the vessel's bows towards the deep water. The power made use of to 'shove off' with

these huge boat-hooks was the windlass, and a rope leading twice or thrice backwards and forwards through blocks, one of which was at the boat's gunwale, and the other at the outward extremity of the spars. This process often proved ineffectual, and we were frequently reduced to the necessity of sending to the nearest *wooding place* in order to procure a flat or raft, for the purpose of getting out a part of the cargo, and thus lightening the vessel sufficiently to float her off. It was very provoking, while thus *fixed*, to see other steamers, more fortunate than ourselves, puffing and panting past us, those on board rather rejoicing at than sympathizing with our forlorn situation. As to expecting any help from the steamboats passing by, it was quite out of the question; although, in most cases, a very little assistance from a vessel under weigh would have soon towed us off, we knew too well the jealousy that exists between the rival boats to entertain for a moment the idea that any help would be vouchsafed to us. The great object of all these boats is to procure *cargo*, and, with this end in view, they of course endeavour, as much as possible, to outstrip each other, and arrive first at the town or *landing* where cotton, molasses, or other cargo is likely to be ready for them.

It not unfrequently happened that we passed steamers which, like our own, had been unlucky enough to get aground, and great was the *triumph-*

*ing* on board when we chanced to find one which had passed us by when in the like unpleasant situation.

It was fortunate for us that our party on board was a pleasant one, for if it had been otherwise, the confinement and the sameness of the routine of our daily life would have been almost unbearable. We had a great many books amongst us—indeed, it is one of the best privileges of America, that literature, besides being a cheap luxury, is at the same time a very portable one. Our companions had travelled, and thoroughly enjoyed, and were fully capable of appreciating, the various objects of curiosity and places of interest which they had visited during a lengthened sojourn in most of the countries of Europe. When this is the case with Americans, and when they have had their national prejudices (what one must call) *scrubbed* off, for the process of *rubbing* would be one of much too mild a character to effect the desired end, I know *no* people more delightful. It is, I fancy, often a rude, and in many cases a painful process thus to cleanse away the 'perilous stuff' of hardened prejudice and inveterate nationality which encrusts itself round the hearts and ideas of Americans who have never stirred from their own continent. The terrible prejudices which grow up at home are in their case strengthened by a want of near contrast, and by a thousand egotistical feelings which are born

with them, and which are too agreeable to be willingly parted with. But let an intelligent American (and they are most of them intelligent) set out on what they call the grand tour, let him mix with the well-informed and intelligent of other countries, and the result almost invariably is, that his natural tact (for in this valuable gift they generally abound) will lead him to imitate what is good, and reject the bad; and finally to return to his own prosperous land more alive, even than formerly, to her real advantages, but at the same time fully aware of imperfections of which he was before ignorant, and willing to confess that she is not *yet* '*the* greatest country on '*arth*.'

Whenever I make an acquaintance with an American, my first object is to discover whether he has ever been in Europe. To do this is generally no very difficult task, for not only are they fond of mentioning their travels and talking of what they have seen and done in the old world, but there is generally a something in the manner and appearance of an American who has 'seen the world,' which distinguishes him greatly from those who have never been out of the Union. It is not *always* that Americans will allow that other nations besides themselves can boast of any freedom, or, indeed, of any merit of any kind whatsoever. Beauty of scenery they also choose to think is only to be found in the Union; and as to intelligence, internal

strength, and weight among nations, they seem to imagine that there can be no dispute about it; but that the Americans can with justice lay claim to being *more* learned, *more* powerful, and altogether *more* extraordinary than any other people in the world. This conviction, on one side, naturally puts a limit to conversation, and therefore I aver that though Americans are generally eminently agreeable as compañions *after* they have become *degourdis* by an intercourse with Europe and Europeans, they are often quite the contrary before.

The number of mules we had on the lower deck amounted to about thirty; they had been shipped from Kentucky, and were to be delivered at a sugar plantation a short distance above New Orleans. The creatures were of a very large and handsome breed, and withal extremely vicious and difficult to manage, if we might judge from the incessant *stable-like* noise which ascended to us from the regions they inhabited. Throughout the day, and during every hour of the otherwise quiet night, did those wicked brutes neigh and kick and plunge, till sometimes it really seemed as if a whole herd of mustangs* had been let loose among us. The noise and uproar made by these vicious animals was not rendered more endurable by the mingling with it of horrid oaths and abuse

* Wild Mexican horses.

on the part of the men who had them in charge; altogether, the near neighbourhood of so many animals caused us often to regret, for our own sakes, the extremely low rate at which cattle and live stock of all kinds can be conveyed down the great western rivers—I believe the charge the whole way down from Louisville or St. Louis to New Orleans is only four dollars a-head. Were the rate of passage money a little higher, our nights might, perhaps, have been quieter, nor would the air on deck, and even in the cabin, have been so completely impregnated with the odour of a not very well kept farm-yard, as we often found it to be.

A great deal has been said about the extreme danger attending a voyage down the Mississippi in one of the high-pressure boats, and I even recollect that our captain (when we were crossing the Atlantic) declared that he would prefer running the risks of winter passages on *his* line of waters, than incur the dangers of *one* Mississippi trip. There can be no doubt that it *is* 'risky;' and that the accounts of the fatal accidents which occur are not much exaggerated; but then it must be recollected that the steamers are almost *innumerable*, and that, among so many, some *must* come to an untimely end. Still, with the possibility, or indeed probability of being either burnt, drowned, 'snagged,' or 'sawyered,' hanging over our heads,

(of which we *might* have been kept in continual remembrance by the ominous life-preservers in our state-rooms,) I do not think that it ever occurred to any of our cheerful little party that they *ought* to be nervous, or that we ever called to mind the perils by which we were surrounded.

Some time ago, steam-boat accidents were much more frequent than they are now—so much so, that the government were at last roused to a sense of the necessity of their interference. Some regulations were then made, and *inspectors* of machinery appointed, by whose instrumentality and *surveillance* it was thought that the safety of the travelling public might be secured. I understand, however, that the improvement and additional security in the steamers (if there be any) can in nowise be attributed to the exertions or watchfulness of these government functionaries, who are said to *perform* their very responsible duties by merely making the trifling exertion of going on board the boats, and then, without wasting time on troublesome scouting, drinking 'slings' and 'juleps' *ad libitum.*

In cases of explosion, it is those who are in the *fore*-part of the vessel who run the greatest danger: thus it is that the *ladies*, whose saloon is farther *aft*, so often escape to describe the scene of horror, while the husbands and brothers, who have instinctively rushed forward to 'see what is the matter,' become involved in the general wreck, and never

return to make known the result of their inquiries. I have heard frightful descriptions of these awful occurrences, cases where the fore-part of the vessel has been forced away from the stern cabins, leaving the bereft, and miserable occupants to all the uncertainty and helplessness of a situation which *may* be imagined, but to which no pen can do justice.

We placed implicit reliance on the word of the captain, who assured us that *his* 'ingines' were 'first-rate,' and quite new, so that, whatever other accident might befall us, the bursting of the boilers was not to be anticipated. We had only one alarm of this nature, but though proceeding from a ludicrous cause, it was enough to make the timid ladies 'shriek,' and the 'brave,' instead of 'standing still,' rush forth to see 'what was going on.' The case was this. One afternoon, we were suddenly startled by a *new noise*. Now, a sound to which one has not been accustomed, is, I think, on board a steamer, rather an agitating thing, implying generally an accident of some kind or other. On this occasion we were not kept long in suspense as to the cause, for the *new noise* was speedily followed by an equally unprecedented sight. In a moment, a rush of water deluged the saloon, and a burst of steam rendered every object it contained indistinct. What it all meant, we could not imagine, and, poor helpless women that we were, we were left very long to our fears, and our uncer-

tainties, for no one of our emissaries seemed inclined to return, or even to *send* us any information. At last, we arrived at the truth of the matter, which was simply this. One of the refractory mules had escaped from its confinement, and being, as it appeared, in an investigating mood, had ventured to a part of the vessel where no mule had any business to be, and, while careering about in joy at its recovered freedom, had contrived to turn, with its awkward hoofs, some important portion of the engine machinery, (*what*, I know not,) and thus to *turn on* the steam, all over the ship.

We often came to an anchor during the night, and seldom, during the hours of darkness, went at more than half speed, so that, what with these prudent delays, and the hours we spent aground, our progress was slow indeed. Our time by day was passed in reading, distorting skeins of silk, and bunches of beads, into all imaginable forms, talking (not *scandal*, for the number of our mutual *friends* was very limited), and walking, when the weather permitted, on the hurricane deck.

There is often very high, and also very dishonest play on board these steamers. I believe, however, that this evil has lately been somewhat remedied, and that the gangs of sharpers and knowing hands who formerly infested the river steamers—plying their odious trade with great emolument to themselves, and utter ruin to the pockets and morals of

their victims—have diminished in numbers, and turpitude. There are still, however, quite enough remaining, to render caution very necessary, for the stake played for is almost invariably high, and *loafing* characters are still extremely cunning in the art of turning all the luck on their own side.

The hurricane deck is not well adapted for the purposes of a promenade. It is difficult of access, as we are obliged to clamber up the paddle boxes, in order to arrive at it, and when there, it is not very satisfactory to walk on a sloping roof, slippery with ice, and destitute of any guard or gallery between one's precious self and the watery waste below. All these combined disadvantages were sufficient (except on very tempting days, of which we had remarkably few) to prevent the ladies from taking exercise in the open air: some of the gentlemen, however, continued to brave the dangers and disagreeables of the place, and paced for hours on the slippery roof.

The Ohio is certainly a beautiful river, but after journeying on it for a few hundred miles, one grows quite tired of the monotony and sameness of the scenery. We were also disappointed in the colour of the 'crystal stream,' which, though certainly not like the running mud of the Mississippi, is nevertheless indebted to its contrast with that thickly flowing river, for the many praises and compliments it has received. Our captain, who

seems very tenacious of the character for *limpidity* of '*la belle rivière*,' assures me that the muddiness of the waters is owing to the washing away of the banks, caused by the waves of the constantly passing steamers. Every now and then we pass one of the huge 'flats' laden with coal, or perhaps corn. Many of the farmers in the Northern States, instead of dispatching their produce by steam, in charge of a *super-cargo*, prefer building a raft or flat, and thus carrying their own produce to market. After their crops are got in, they have several months of leisure, during which time there is but little to be done on their farms, so that they can afford time to combine both business and pleasure by navigating their own unwieldly crafts down to New Orleans.

The professional boatman are a very lawless and rowdy race, 'up,' as the song says, 'to ebbery ting.' In former days, while the forests were still forests, and the Indians were not yet driven away from the banks of the Ohio, the life of the boatmen must have been both exciting and romantic. *Then*, there was no better way of travelling up and down the rivers than on the slow-going, and often very dangerous flat-boats, which plied upon them: a temporary shed was erected for the accommodation of the women and children, and great were the sufferings and privations to which they were often exposed. An old traveller, who had lived in those

*days*, and who had, with his family, been more than once obliged to have recourse to this mode of travelling, described his voyages to me in a most graphic manner. According to him, there was formerly much *poetry* in the life of the Ohio boatmen. Music was often heard echoing from the distant bluffs, and merry laughs resounded along the shore, and laughing girls came down to the water's-edge, to greet the boatmen as they neared the bank. Sometimes the Indians would come down singly, or in bands, and offered them trifling articles, generally of food, for sale. The quaint, and original species of wit, peculiar to the western men, enlivened the voyage; and so did the dances and the cheerful sounds of the *fiddle*, to which the boatmen danced on the deck of their slowly-gliding craft.

Since that time many changes have taken place: the boats, now that the steamers have increased and multiplied so miraculously, have become less numerous, and the march of civilization has brought with it an increase of crime. Drunkenness is a vice which has taken strong hold on the Ohio boatmen; for whiskey is here as cheap and abundant as in the north, and their vocation is often a very laborious one. The race, in short, of these singular beings, is becoming gradually extinct, for I fancy they are hardly to be recognised

in the swearing,murdering, and violent men, who are sent in charge of the flat-boats to New Orleans.

I must now give you a specimen of the brutality of these Ohio boatmen, and also of the dreadful evils which the cheapness of *spirits* entails upon the lower classes in America. We were sitting in the saloon one morning after breakfast; it was a dull and heavy day, and the sky, surcharged with moisture, looked as if ready to hurl an avalanche of snow upon our heads: we were seated, as usual, round the stove, endeavouring to insinuate a little warmth into our shivering frames, and the gentlemen of our party were on the hurricane deck, watching the rapid progress of the steamer on her course, for we happened to be in deep water, and were going at the rate of sixteen knots an hour. The banks of the river were covered with snow, and the dismal looking forests had a slender white clothing on their leafless branches, which increased the gloom of their appearance by its shroud-like aspect. Now and then small sheets of ice came floating down, tossed about by the eddies, and crashed into pieces against the sides of our vessel. It was, indeed, a scene of perfect desolation, one worthy of being described by the author of 'Martin Chuzzlewit,' and the immortalizer of the renowned 'fever swamp.'

There we sat—patient, cold, and forlorn, but

quite unprepared for an event which shortly followed, and only congratulating ourselves that, for the moment at least, we were making rapid progress towards more civilized scenes. Suddenly we were startled by a loud splash in the water, which was followed instantaneously by the sharp, abrupt, and universal cry of 'A man overboard!' The steamer was instantly stopped, (in itself a dangerous proceeding, at the rapid rate at which we were going,) and a boat was immediately lowered, in the hope of rescuing the unfortunate individual (whoever he might be) from his otherwise inevitable fate. The horror of those first few moments of suspense will, I think, never be forgotten, either by myself or by my fair and gentle American companion. It was some time before our bewildered faculties began to comprehend it was '*only one of the deck passengers*,' and *not* one in whom we were deeply interested, that was at that moment struggling for life in the rapid current of the remorseless Ohio. The feeling of deep relief and gratitude which we (perhaps selfishly) felt, did not absorb us long; for we were soon standing at the stern-window, watching the progress of the boat, the crew of which were straining every nerve and muscle, in their efforts to reach the spot where they imagined the drowning man to be.

The captain himself was in the boat, for the moment the alarm was given he had sprung into

her, hatless and coatless, with two of his crew. We soon perceived, from the station we had taken up, a man a little a head of the boat, who was swimming lustily against the current, and who, as it appeared to us, was using his best endeavours to reach the shore, and *not* the boat which was sent to his rescue. Near to the struggling wretch there was a flat boat, with its crew of drunken and disorderly ruffians, who, though they would not have put themselves much out of their way to save any one's life, *did* make the exertion of hooking the drowning man up, as he was swimming past them, and, with many an unfeeling jest, *jerking* him into the boat belonging to the steamer. It was an indescribable relief when we saw him placed securely in the bottom of the boat, and we kept out eyes anxiously fixed upon the movements of the little craft as she neared the steamer, for it was, of course. quite uncertain whether life yet remained in the poor creature we had seen taken out from the ice-cold water.

The boat was now within twenty yards of the steamer, and many a hand was already extended to afford assistance, and many a kind heart beat fast with nervous expectation, when, with a suddenness of motion which defied all precautionary measures, the rescued man raised himself in the boat, and, before it was possible to be even aware of his intention, had thrown himself over the side!

Again all was confusion and dismay; the captain, with the most merciful and praiseworthy perseverance, rowed again towards him. There he was, once more battling with the waters, with the ice circling round him, and his own efforts evidently exerted to enable him to reach the shore. It was plain to all of us that his strength was now becoming exhausted by his exertion, for when the boat was within a yard of him, he sank below the surface of the stream. He rose again, and so near that the captain caught him by a portion of his clothing; it broke away, however, from his grasp, and again he sunk. Once more we saw him rise, and he was then within reach of the aforesaid flat boat, the crew of which *could* again have rescued him, without giving themselves the slightest trouble; their unwonted mood of humanity was, however, over—at least for that day, and they declined interfering. We could hear the captain's voice calling out to them for assistance. 'No,' cried one of them with a brutal oath, 'we took the tarnation fool out once, and you may do it yourself this time, and with a loud, coarse laugh they continued their occupation. So the poor wretch sank at last, never to rise again; the waters closed over his head, and we saw the convulsive movements of his form no more.

Further delay was now useless, so leaving the watery grave, which we now feared was that of the

*suicide*, the captain ordered his boat's crew to row back to the 'Leonora,' and we were soon again on our way. On inquiry, we found that the drowned man had happily left neither wife nor child to bemoan his loss, and that the only relative he had on board the steamer was his brother. This man, a rough, uneducated back-woodsman, told us, by way of accounting for some strong symptoms o mental aberration which he had remarked in the conduct of the deceased, that 'he had lately *taken up* with religion,' a measure which he, in his benighted ignorance, seemed to consider sufficiently preposterous to account for everything he had done. It appeared that the miserable man had, for several days preceding, been labouring under a strong delusion that he had some violent and blood-thirsty enemies on board the vessel, and that his life was not safe as long as he remained in it. The brother assured us that, to the best of his belief, self-destruction was not aimed at by this poor deluded being, but that his object was to reach the river's bank, and thus effect his escape. Had he succeeded in this rash attempt, his fate would have been a dreadful one. Alone in those vast and trackless forests, in inclement weather, without shelter for his head, or any means of supporting existence, he must have died the miserable and lingering death of starvation. It was better as it was, and so we all agreed, as, with hearts saddened

by the mournful catastrophe we returned to our stove and our reflection. There was something very painfully shocking in the brother's fixed idea that religion (instead of a source of consolation and strength) had been the exciting cause of mental disease. That he had 'taken to preaching' was in itself, to the minds of those reckless men, a sufficient proof of insanity; nor did they give themselves the trouble to recollect that, previously to his having taken upon himself the office so reprobated by the rest, their wretched companion had, from excess of dissipation, been a sufferer from *delirium tremens*, that most common and fearful complaint in the Southern States of the Union.

Accidents from drowning are very common in these rivers, and it rarely happens that one or more persons do not fall victims to the remorseless current, during a trip up or down the Mississippi. The extremely crowded state of the lower deck, and the misfortune of its being almost on a level with the water, and totally destitute of bulwarks, are alone sufficient to account for these frequent disasters, without being obliged to take into consideration that generally deck passengers are more than half intoxicated, and that the only sober ones are helpless children, whose parents have frequently neither time nor inclination to look after them. The Yankees jest on every subject, and it became a standing joke, at the breakfast-table, to inquire of

the 'capern' how many of his passengers had been missed since the night before. To me, however, the waggery was anything but a lively one; for during many days after that event, I never heard a splash in the water without feeling sure that it was a human being, and if I missed any one in whom I was at all interested for ten minutes longer than usual, I immediately jumped at the conclusion that the strong Mississippi current was bearing him or her to darkness and to death.

The end of the gentlemen's saloon furthest from ours, is called 'Social Hall,' and was, in point of fact, a 'bar' where 'liquors' of all kinds, simple and compound, from gin-sling to sherry cobblers, could be procured. Considering the proximity of these incentives to mirth and ill-behaviour, it was wonderful how quiet our neighbours were. We have never been (since the first few days) disturbed by any sounds more offensive than occasional shrieks of laughter, or some other of the strange whooping, crowing noises, the production of which is an accomplishment in which the gentlemen from the far-west particularly excel.

The food is very good, considering the difficulties of obtaining anything tolerable, and the fact that there are considerably more than a hundred passengers to feed at least three times a day. Beefsteaks are, of course, the *piece de resistance*,

both at breakfast and supper: it is a favourite dish with the Americans, most of whom, when sending their plates for some of the dainty dish, particularly request to have it 'rare,' which, in English phraseology, signifies underdone. At dinner, we have roast turkeys and beef; mutton we enjoy very seldom, and, moreover, it is always bad; but of pigs we have a choice in various forms: sweet potatoes are the usual vegetable, and an indescribable pudding, served in saucers and eaten with molasses, winds up the repast. The tea is not good, neither is the milk and butter; but these are luxuries so rarely to be met with in steamboats of any description, that their absence causes us no disappointment. The passage money from Louisville to New Orleans is, I think, astonishingly little, fifteen dollars a person being certainly a very small sum to pay for the enjoyment of the above luxuries, and for steam-travelling for more than fifteen hundred miles. I believe that not a few of the passengers hailed with delight the announcement of any fresh delay, preferring greatly to be kept at the cost of the steamboat captain. As I have an opportunity of sending off this letter, I shall write no more at present.

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# LETTER XXVII.

PASS CAIRO—ENTER THE MISSISSIPPI—PUBLIC OPINION — LAND AT MEMPHIS — DESCRIPTION OF THE MISSISSIPPI — 'WESTERN MEN' AT THE WOODING PLACE — VICKSBURG — THICK FOGS — TOUCH AT NATCHEZ—ARRIVAL AT NEW ORLEANS.

*New Orleans—December.*

FOR some hours previously to our arriving at the north of the Ohio, the scenery had rather improved in beauty. The shores became even somewhat rocky, and the difficulties of the navigation appeared to increase. We had been looking forward with raised expectations, to what we had weakly imagined would be a beautiful 'meeting of the waters' at Cairo, where the Ohio and Mississippi rivers unite, but alas! our hopes were not realized. Cairo itself (a city it is called) consists of a few wretched looking wooden-houses, built on the *spit* of land between the two rivers: it is frequently under water for days together, and the only wonder is, that the good city of Cairo contrives to keep its station at all, and has escaped so long the fate of being washed away from the face of the earth by the force of the angry flood.

The scene altogether was one of desolation, nor did we require the recollection of some wrecked steam-boats, which we had passed a short time before, to come to the conclusion, that the water-logged town of Cairo was the head-quarters of gloom, fever, and depression.

And now we were fairly on the bosom of the 'mighty' Mississippi, that largest, and ugliest, and most tremendous of rivers; tremendous through the force of its resistless currents, and the fever-swamps that spread their noxious vapours over its surface. On we sped, *crashing* with great noise, shocks, and effort through the large masses of ice, with which the muddy surface of the river was crowded, but proceeding at a comparatively slow rate, from the hindrance that they threw in the way of our progress. After passing Cairo, we began to increase our cargo, and continued doing so all the way, by taking in large quantities of corn. Of course, by dint of these stoppages, our vessel was soon sunk much deeper in the water than was either beneficial or agreeable.

In this manner, and stopping at each, we passed Madrid, Troy, and other places, with grandiloquent and ancient names, but with a modern nothingness, which threw somewhat more than a *shade* of ridicule over these imposing appellations. In the neighbourhood of these newly-erected *cities*, we often found the humble abode of their original

founder and godfather; the name of his domicile being *Jacksonville, Williamsburgh, Thomsonville,* or the like: the love of handing down a name to posterity is, certainly, one of the most widely-spread weaknesses of our nature.

The cold, after leaving Cairo, was, for the first two or three days, intense; the quantity of ice on the rivers, and the constant snow-storms giving a wintry *feel* and *look,* that made us long greatly for a more southern clime, and lament more than ever the hours which we continued to spend aground.

It was impossible not to entertain a deep feeling of commiseration for the unfortunate *deck hands,* who were working their passages—poor creatures! down to New Orleans. For five days and nights had these miserable people been exposed to the inclemency of the weather, being hardly worked during the whole time; especially when the steamer happened to get a-ground. Their labour was so extremely severe, what with taking in wood, getting cargo on board, &c., and they seemed most of them so thoroughly worn out, that some of the 'first-class' passengers, at length, took pity on their hard fate. After communicating one with another, and inviting others to 'express their sentiments,' (for the importance attached to *public* opinion is well known in America,) a deputation was formed to wait upon the captain, and make known to him the disapprobation which the pas-

sengers felt bound to express, at the cruel and tyrannical manner in which the Irish and Germans on board were treated. The captain, after listening very patiently to the end of the harangue, made the following *humane* reply: 'Well, by ——! if they don't like it, they may just go ashore and be ——, nobody wants 'em to stop here.' After this, there was nothing more to be said, but I could not help noticing the remark of one of the deputation, who, as he turned away, exclaimed—"Well, by ——! cap'em, if them wause *niggers*, you dar'n't treat 'em as you do them poor devils.' Does not this tend to prove how greatly the negro race are protected by the mighty shield of *public opinion?*

The banks, for the first two hundred and fifty miles down the Mississippi, were somewhat less level and monotonous than we had been led to expect they would be. The Chickasan Bluffs are really quite respectable heights, here, where there is so much that is '*flat*' at least, if neither 'stale' nor 'unprofitable.' They consist of three or four ranges situated on the left bank of the river, and on the last of them stands the 'city' of *Memphis.* Anything more different than the Memphis before us, to the Egyptian city of columns and sphinxes, pyramids and porphyry domes, it would be difficult to conceive. The Memphis of the West differs in nothing from the other newly-raised

wooden cities which are for ever springing up on the banks of the rivers, though the *Mississippi* bears a greater resemblance to the lotus bearing Nile, than does this wooden city to the Memphis which history and our own imaginations have painted.

We found here a large cargo of freight, ready to be taken on board, so, as we were assured of an hour on shore, we agreed to take advantage of the delay, and visit this rapidly increasing, and rather prettily situated town. Of course, we all *fancied* that we were all in want of some indispensable article or other, which we thought might possibly be procured at a *dry goods* store at Memphis; so in spite of the cold and snow, and the steep and slippery banks, we set off to clamber up them to the *city*. There were two or three carriages, of rather a primitive description, driving and standing about, and in the main street, which fronts the river, are three or four deplorable looking stores, at which we could procure none of the things we wanted: so, after all, we found the best plan to pursue was to hurry back to the steamer, with a few bunches of frozen bananas, some sugar canes, and half a dozen pine-apples in the same state. We found, as we approached the water, that the ship's bell was already ringing for our recall, and it was well that our return was not longer

delayed, as—the passage-money having been paid —no great courtesy was wasted in waiting for lingering passengers.

The fruit we had brought on board was hailed with glee, as a sign that we were approaching a more genial climate, and indeed, after leaving Memphis, we had but little cause to complain of the cold.

We had now entered the cotton region, and the Mississippi had at length assumed its most odious aspect. There is, however, so much variety in this wonderful river, that it is unfair to associate it in one's mind *only* with ugliness and muddy banks. The Mississippi rises on high but marshy land, and runs through nineteen degrees of latitude. At its source the winters are cold and freezing as those of Lapland, while at its mouth they rival in mildness those of Madeira. At the former are found only the fir tree and the birch, while at the latter flourish the palm, the orange tree, and the sugar cane.

The upper part of this vast river, which is generally rendered unnavigable by reason of the ice, in the month of November, flows for the first four hundred miles through a high prairie country, until it is precipitated over the falls of St. Anthony; after this, it flows on for seven hundred miles through one of the most beautiful regions in the world, bordering the states of Wisconsin and Illi-

nois; and eventually through a thousand miles of level *swamp*, till it falls into the sea at the Balize. After the junction of this mighty river with the *Missouri*, its waters assume a totally different character. Instead of being a softly flowing stream, with a sandy bottom, it becomes a wild, boisterous, boiling, devastating flood, dashing along between banks rendered desolate-looking by its overflowings, and by the ravages made by its impetuous current. My first attempt to drink the muddy water of the Mississippi was quite unsuccessful, and it was not till driven to do so by necessity that I could conquer my repugnance to swallow the dark brown, and earth-thickened fluid. The southerners, however, declare it to be possessed of almost medicinal qualities, so highly do they think of the wholesome nature of the Mississippi water. It is, indeed, an awful looking torrent, and no one who has *only* seen rivers which flow *rationally* and calmly on, can form an idea of the swelling whirlpools which vex the surface of the Mississippi. These eddies rise with a whirling motion and considerable noise, often urging the boats away from their track. By the wonderful force of the current islands are torn up, sand-bars are displaced, and whole masses of soil, forming the bends of the river, (with the enormous trees growing upon them,) swept with resistless force into the stream.

The uniformity of the 'points and bends,' as

they are called in the country, is very remarkable. The deepest channel is *in* the 'bend,' and also the strongest force of the currents; and you may well understand that the resistless force of the river is constantly breaking away, and washing over, the soft and alluvial soil of which the yielding shore is formed. It is in the 'bends' that the appearance of the young and rapidly growing groves of cottonwood trees have often the most striking effect. These trees rise from the margin of the river, and are thus extremely diminutive, being only the growth of a few months; behind them are those which have sprung up some two years before, and so on in succession, till the growth of the trees arrives at its full and lofty height. You would not believe me, were I to tell you *how* rapidly these trees spring up, but I assure you that I believe all the wonders that are told of them and among them, that you may see a miniature forest where, a fortnight before, the soil was perfectly barren. The boatmen, as well as the Indians, often calculate distances by the number of the 'bends,' instead of having recourse to the more usual method of reckoning by miles and leagues.

Very soon after we left Memphis, the warm, damp, and, I think, unwholesome southernly wind began to blow, the air became oppressive, and continued fogs rendered our progress very slow; but one of the worst consequences attending this

change in the atmosphere was, that it caused the *pastoral* effluvia from the lower deck to be more disagreeable and offensive than ever.

As we descended the river, the state of Arkansas was on our right hand for several hundred miles. The general character of its inhabitants is none of the best, and it is acknowledged to be the refuge and head-quarters of *Loafers* and lawless characters of all kinds. In *Arkansaw* (as it is pronounced here) are also to be found the most numerous and accomplished professors in the art of using the bowie knife, and also of the ingenious one of gouging. We saw some curious specimens of the 'western men' at several of the *wooding places;* they are generally tall, lanky, unwashed men, with clay-coloured faces, looking for all the world as though they had been made out of the same mud that dyes the Mississippi waters. Their hair is commonly of a reddish flaxen hue, and hangs in uncombed masses over the coat collars; add to this, an old broad brimmed hat, with the crown half out, and boots of untanned leather, with the pantaloons tucked down in the inside of them, and a 'western man' is before you. These curious and original beings were generally accompanied by two or three dogs, and they are never known to move without a rifle and a bowie knife. The forests of Arkansas are said to be the favourite haunts of bears during certain seasons of the year, and the

creatures (it is affirmed) travel down from the north, a distance of several hundred miles, in order to luxuriate in these, their favourite swamps.

We had generally a scene of great excitement at the small towns we stopped at for *trading* purposes. Amongst our fellow-travellers were several keen speculators, who were eagerly on the watch for newspapers from 'the City,' in order to ascertain the price of corn there. When the desired information was obtained, there was a rush ashore, and very probably a bargain was immediately struck for fifty or a hundred bags of corn, which bags were, with incredible dispatch, shipped on board our steamer. *We* were often eagerly consulted as to whether it was probable the 'famine' in England would be so severe as to make 'corn' a profitable speculation, and it was often highly amusing to look on at their bargainings.

'Well, sir-r-r,' would the speculator say, addressing the farmer, over whom he was trying to 'come possom'—'Well, sir-r-r, I reckon you waunt to sell?'

*Farmer:* Guess I do.

*Speculator:* What may you want, sir-r-r? Forty cents, I expect?

*Farmer:* I calculate I'm bound to realize sixty.

*Speculator:* Too high, sir-r-r—too high.

*Farmer:* Well, sir, by the 'tarnal, I'll *make* pigs.

And so they went on.

The twelfth day after leaving Louisville, we arrived at Vicksburgh, near to which place are some of the largest cotton plantations in the State of Mississippi. Vicksburgh itself is also a place of considerable importance, its population amounting to forty thousand souls. It is built on the side of a hill, and the first hundred yards of ascent to it was made through mud several inches (and in many places several feet) in depth. I never saw *any* so apparently *unfathomable.* The stores seemed, though well supplied with the *necessaries* of life, rather deficient in its luxuries, unless I may class under that head the variety of curious drinks which are advertised for sale at every other house. The supply of, and demand for, these liquors made, I have no doubt, plenty of work both for the doctors and lawyers, for, as far as I could judge, the business of Vicksburgh appeared to be almost monopolized by *drink, law,* and *physic.*

Perhaps, however, after all, I am doing the city injustice, as the arts and sciences did not seem to be entirely neglected within its limits. As a proof of this, I must tell you that I saw advertised a lecture on geology for one night, on electricity for another, and I cannot tell you on what learned matters besides. I was assured that the itinerant lecturers on these abstruse subjects are very successful in attracting numerous audiences; and that it mattered little whether the scene of their labours

was in the old established and thickly settled States, or in the forests of Arkansas, for that the wild back-woodsmen often travel long distances in the hope of picking up something new from these 'coons.' The 'coon' himself is generally a universal genius, and will lecture indiscriminately on any subject which he thinks likely to attract a large audience, it being evidently all the same to him whether the theme on which he harangues be *Temperance, Fourrierism, the Arts and Sciences,* or 'Things in General.'

The only tolerably pretty town on this part of the banks of the Mississippi is Natchez; it stands high, and near it are a succession of bluffs, or headlands, thirty or forty feet above the level of the river, and covered with trees of a beautiful growth and colour, which form an agreeable change after the low fever swamps, of which we had had so much more than enough.

At Natchez, our agreeable friends left us, greatly to our regret. We put them ashore at the landing of their own plantation, and it was pleasant to see the genuine and heartily-expressed joy of their negroes, who, being most of them old retainers of the family, came down in numbers to the river side to greet the return of their masters, and to be received by *them* with looks of pleasure, and by a hand cordially and kindly extended to each.

Our progress, since we left Vicksburgh, had been unavoidably delayed during the nights by the density of the fogs which (towards evening) almost constantly prevail in the lower part of the river. The immense number of the steamers passing up and down makes the chance of collision very great; and the course of the river is so tortuous that you are no sooner round one point, than the chances are that you have run well up on the opposite bank. Against the frightful dangers of collision all possible precautions are taken, and the ringing of the ship's bell through the dense and bewildering fog is incessantly heard; gigantic lamps are also generally suspended in conspicuous situations; these, however, are not often of much use, though a steam-boat captain once *had* the vanity to describe his 'shining light' after this wise. 'It wause,' he said, 'a perfect prairie on fire; I got it out once the darkest night that ever came over, and all creation *riz*, thinking it was daylight.' The greatest annoyance which was experienced, owing to the thickness of the atmosphere, arose from the difficulty of finding our wooding places, and we were often detained for hours together by the necessity of *feeling* our way along the banks.

After leaving Natchez, we soon found ourselves fairly among the orange-trees and the sugar canes: negro villages rose up on either shore, and huge

sugar houses, with here and there a planter's pretty house, attracted our attention. The day before we reached New Orleans, we got rid of the animals which had caused us so much annoyance. It was a long business, that of *persuading* the mules to go on shore, as, from the lowness of the river, they were obliged to walk over an extremely narrow plank, greatly to their own displeasure. One poor beast had its leg broken through its struggles, but the rest crossed the *bridge* in safety; and it was with unfeigned satisfaction that I saw them careering on the bank, and rejoicing in their liberty.

We were now nearing 'the city,' as New Orleans is called 'par excellence,' on the Mississippi river; and glad enough we were to feel that so it was, for we had been the almost unparalleled time of fifteen days in the steamer, and were thoroughly tired of the monotony of our life. 'It's a glorious place, stranger,' said a southerner to my companion, when, on the morning of the sixteenth day, the tall masts of the shipping, and the dome of St. Charles came in sight—'it's a glorious place—and an ex-pansive country, I reckon! It can *swaller* Mexico, gouge both eyes out of Great Britain, and whip all creation! And yet, some folks say it is in danger. Danger!—why, I'd insure it myself for a quarter per cent., and include Texas and Oregon in the policy. Who's afraid!' The southern *gentleman*

was still continuing his speech, when, by slow degrees, the steamer neared the city, and at half-speed crept through the maze of shipping to the quay. An hour after, we were rattling along its well-known and badly-paved streets to the St. Louis Hotel, where we have taken up our quarters.

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## LETTER XXVIII.

ST. LOUIS HOTEL — DUELS IN THE SOUTH — IMPROVEMENT IN MANNERS AND CUSTOMS—LYNCH LAW — DESCRIPTION OF THE CITY — COUNTRY RIDES—NEW ORLEANS RACES—NEGRO JOCKEYS.

*New Orleans—December.*

WE were very fortunate in finding some excellent apartments vacant at St. Louis Hotel, and found no difficulty in making the necessary arrangements for *dieting* in our own rooms, whenever we felt inclined to do so. The 'St. Louis' is an enormous stone-building, and contains within its walls, not only the 'City Exchange,' but a fine 'Rotunda'—as it is respectfully called: its dome is painted in fresco, and produces rather a good effect from the distance at which it is seen. In this Rotunda, *human* (as well as other) auctions are daily held; the walls are ornamented by portraits of those *great men* by whose magnanimous exertions the boon of *freedom* was obtained for America; and the privilege of beholding their benevolent countenances was, doubtless, duly valued by the slaves who had the *good fortune* to be sold in the Rotunda.

The 'St. Charles' Hotel' is the Astor House of New Orleans, and is much more frequented by men of business than *our* more quiet hotel; it is also in a more central situation, which accounts for a portion of its noise. The 'St. Louis' is in the *French* quarter of the city, and, from being on so much larger a scale than its rival, is better adapted for the reception of *families*. The French and Spanish merchants appear to have adopted this hotel in preference to the St. Charles; and it is seldom, at the table-d'hôte, that we hear the English language spoken.

The night after our arrival, a masked ball was given in the public Assembly Rooms belonging to the St. Louis, and, as we could witness the scene of gaiety without taking any more trouble than that of walking through a private door and passage close to our apartments, we went for a short time into the gallery, which overlooks the ball-room, and were greatly amused with all we saw. The 'Pol-kat,' '*Cat*-chouka,' and the 'Crack-a-vein,' (*so* I have seen them *spelt* in the west,) were danced with a vigour which I have never witnessed, except in southern climates. The orchestra was a very tolerable one, and the company ostensibly well-behaved.

So many murderous and tragical scenes *have* been enacted at these balls, that there is now (I hear) an imperative order to search every gentle-

man before he enters the room, and this is done in order to discover any hidden arms which he may have about his person. The bowie knife—though a forbidden weapon, is generally overlooked on these occasions: it is almost always concealed *down* the back of the coat, the end of the hilt touching the collar, and quite within the owner's reach, should he find it necessary, or expedient, to use the weapon. Lawless and murderous deeds have, however, of late years been far more rare in this part of America than they formerly were: there was a time—and that not very far remote—when, even to go to the theatre was considered an act denoting extreme rashness of character, from the number of quarrels that were *picked*, and assassinations that were perpetrated there: and, as to the masked balls, they were, of course, far more 'risky,' and no persons, with any proper value for their own lives, ever thought of attending them at all.

Two or three days after our arrival a gentleman was shot in broad daylight at the entrance to our hotel, and the event, from peculiar circumstances, caused more excitement than such occurrences usually do in New Orleans. The individual who thus lost his life had long been a notorious character, as a confirmed bully and a first-rate shot. His adversary, with whom, as it appeared, he had had an inveterate and long-standing quarrel, had

been *properly* warned by the duellist in the usual form that he intended to 'use him up' at the first convenient opportunity. This, of course, put his intended victim on his guard, and *he* being a somewhat nervous man, his guard was proportionately watchful. I can imagine few situations much less agreeable than that of expecting to have, at any moment, the thrust of a bowie knife in one's side, or a pistol discharged at one's head. Talk of Damocles! his situation was a pleasurable one compared to the dangers which, in the shape of bowie knives and many barrelled pistols, haunted the imagination of this unfortunate citizen at every turn and corner of the street. Being, of course, ever on the *qui vive*, and with one eye, at least, always fixed on the movements of his redoubtable enemy, he perceived him, one eventful day, issuing forth from the St. Louis Hotel, with his hand in his breast-coat pocket. This was quite enough for the other, who, immediately jumping at the conclusion that it was *not* his handkerchief but his bowie knife that he was going to draw out, determined that he would run no unnecessary risk by delay, and taking a loaded pistol from his own pocket, shot the duellist through the heart. There never was any one so little regretted.

A duel of a more orthodox character took place a day or two after, between a young Englishman and an American residing in New Orleans, in which

encounter the latter was killed. The quarrel (which gave rise to a great deal of discussion at the time) originated in the St. Louis ball-room, and was caused by the wilful and vindictive spirit of a young lady, who protested that the Englishman had insulted *her* by placing his partner above her in the dance, and that *she would have satisfaction.* The result of her determination was, the untimely death of her countryman, which caused the bitterest grief to his parents, whose only child he was.

The laws against duelling are, in this country, extremely severe; if detected in a 'breach of the peace' of this nature, both principals and seconds are condemned to the forfeiture of all their most valued privileges as citizens, and are deemed guilty of felony. Another consequence attending duelling is,that should one of the parties be killed in the encounter, the survivor is held liable for his debts.*

These laws are, of course, easily evaded; were

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* The following is a copy of the Act of Congress against duelling in America:—

SEC. 1. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, that if any person shall in the district of Columbia challenge another to fight a duel, or shall send or deliver any written or verbal message purporting or intending to be such challenge, or shall accept any such challenge or message, or

they properly enforced, there can be no doubt that duelling would be entirely put a stop to; but, as I said before, the state of society generally is much improved. Not very long ago, if one *gentleman* declined (however civilly) to drink a glass of wine with another, his refusal (even if they were previously strangers to each other) was taken as an insult, and immediately revenged as such; and even at this day there are many wild and reckless spirits, particularly men from the lawless State of

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shall knowingly carry or deliver an acceptance of such challenge or message to fight a duel in or out of the said district, and such duel shall be fought in or out of said district; and if either of the parties thereto shall be slain or mortally wounded in such duel, the surviving party to such duel, and every person carrying or delivering such challenge or message, or acceptance of such challenge or message as aforesaid, and all others aiding and abetting therein, shall be deemed guilty of felony, and upon conviction thereof, in the said district, shall be punished by imprisonment and confinement to hard labour in the Penitentiary for a term not exceeding ten years nor less than five years, in the discretion of the Court.

SEC. 2. And be it further enacted, that if any person shall give or send, or cause to be given or sent to any person in the district of Columbia any challenge to fight a duel or to engage in single combat with any deadly or dangerous instrument or weapon whatever, or shall be the bearer of any such challenge, every person so giving or sending or causing to be given or sent or accepting such challenge, or being the bearer thereof, and every person aiding and abetting in the giving, sending, or accepting such challenge shall be deemed guilty of a high crime and misdemeanour, and on conviction thereof in any court competent to try the same in the said district

Arkansas, and those locations nearest to the Indian tribes, who are ready primed for fight and excitement, and with whom it is dangerous to decline accepting this pledge of civility. Such characters as these, men essentially 'rowdy,' and 'loafers' by profession, are, in common with the gamblers of whom I before wrote you an account, found in great numbers on the smaller river steamers, particularly on those which are bound for the Red River. These men are looked upon with great

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shall be punished by imprisonment and confinement to hard labour in the Penitentiary for a term not exceeding ten years nor less than five years, in the discretion of the Court.

SEC. 4. And be it further enacted, that if any person shall assault, strike, and beat or wound, or cause to be assaulted, stricken, beaten, or wounded, any person in the district of Columbia for declining or refusing to accept any challenge to fight a duel, or to engage in single combat with any deadly or dangerous instrument or weapon whatever, or shall post or publish, or cause to be posted or published, any writing charging any such person so declining or refusing to accept any such challenge to be a coward, or using any other opprobrious or injurious language therein tending to deride and disgrace such person, for so offending, on conviction thereof in any Court competent of trial thereof, in said district, shall be punished by confinement to hard labour in the Penitentiary for a term not exceeding seven years nor less than three years, at the discretion of the Court.

SEC. 5. And be it further enacted, that in addition to the oath now to be prescribed by law to be administered to the grand jury in the district of Columbia, they shall be sworn faithfully and impartially to inquire into, and true presentment make of, all offences against this Act.

suspicion, and are always avoided as much as possible by the respectable portion of the community who happen to be on board; they are to be found (at least I am told so) always in the *fore* part of the vessel, and are loud and violent in their discourse, never without their cigars or quids in their mouths, and around them is an atmosphere of vice, dirt, and degradation. Another distinguishing mark of these men is, that when *not* engaged in swearing, boasting, and blaspheming, they are sure to be either *whitling* on their chair, or picking their teeth with a bowie knife.

I am thus particular in mentioning this unpleasant character, because he is one of a class in the far south of the Union, which, (though now rapidly disappearing before the march of civilization,) has earned for New Orleans its bad name, in so far as duels and assassinations are concerned. These men are always ready for mischief, and being utterly reckless of consequences, (inasmuch as they have certainly nothing to lose, and *may* reap some advantage in a change,) they are for agitation and bloodshed of some kind or other, no matter how unprincipled its cause or how disastrous its probable effect on the interests of the Republic. It is such men as these who not only help to bring the Locofoco members into Congress, but who are the strongest advocates for *repudiation*, and every other

measure tending to bring disrepute on the American government.

No one would, I think, venture to advocate the expediency of *Lynch justice*, when the arm of legitimate authority is strong enough to enforce its own laws; but when this is not the case, that summary process is not without its advantages. As a proof of this, I must instance, that a few years ago the more respectable citizens of Vicksburgh, (a place which had long been the nest and head quarters of the Mississippi host of gamblers, thieves, and murderers,) rose with one accord, and in a couple of days had literally exterminated all of those dangerous *gentry* that they had been able to discover. Since that time the *profession* has been on the decline, and every day their numbers are diminishing.

I have no doubt that you, in common with so many in England, entertain a vague idea that every other man one meets in the south is, more or less, a modification of the ruffian I have been attempting to describe. From this most unjust and unfounded belief it is only another step to include the whole of America in the same category, and to do so would be quite as absurd as to form an opinion of the whole of the English people, from the specimens of low miscreants which infest the parish of St. Giles', or Whitechapel.

Having, prior to this visit, passed so long a time

at New Orleans, its position and general aspect are quite familiar to me. I must not, however, forget that this is not the case with you, and shall therefore attempt to give you some description of the 'Crescent City.' This name has been given to New Orleans from the bend of the river on which the city is built, and which takes a semi-circular form. The Mississippi is here more than half a mile in width, and its impetuous stream is only prevented from overflowing the city by an embankment which is called the Levee, and on the solidity and endurance of this Le-vee, (as it is pronounced,) the safety of New Orleans depends. This embankment is raised several feet above the level of the river when at its highest floods, and the city is built on the gently *inclined plane* descending from the Levee to the swamps, which are about a mile and a half distant from the river; thus the greater part of the town is frequently several feet below the level of the water.

The southern part of the city is the most ancient, and is now inhabited principally by the Creole families; while the more modern portion of the city, 'higher up stream,' monopolizes almost entirely the business of the place. These two halves are divided by *Canal Street*, which is a broad thoroughfare, running at right angles to the river, and has an avenue of trees in the centre, and a carriage road on either side. The southern part of the city

may blame the Mississippi in a great measure for its loss of prosperity; for the stream (by the bend in its course) being thrown off from the opposite bank, consequently rushes with full force against that part where the old Spanish city is situated. It is owing to this that, as the southern *quartier* loses *ground*, the northern gains it, and that we find an extensive quay, where, when we visited New Orleans three years ago, the Mississippi was rolling on with its turbid waters to the sea.

Such is the vast extent of commerce which is carried on in this great emporium of the west, that the tiers of the shipping—steamers, foreign merchantmen, flat boats, &c., extend along the quays for nearly three miles, and are quite as imposing in appearance as those of Liverpool itself. The space between the river and the warehouses is more than a hundred yards in width, and this literally covered with *goods* of various descriptions. Here you see *acres* of bales of cotton, casks of provisions, sugar, and molasses, by thousands, and *mountains* of bags of corn. All this is the product of this mighty land, watered for twenty thousand miles by the Mississippi and its tributaries. Well may this wondrous river be called the 'Father of Waters,' though by the way this name is not the proper interpretation of the Indian word, *Mississippi*, as its literal interpretation is *Great, Big, Strong*.

We are very fortunate in finding here many of those with whom we became acquainted during our former visit. I confess I greatly prefer, as a general rule of course, the society of southern Americans to that of the *Yankees;* there is something in the frankness of character, warmth of heart, and reckless hospitality of the former, which is very attractive as compared with the formality of manner and money-making natures of the inhabitants of the north.

For the first few days after our arrival we dined at the ladies' ordinary. The public apartments are remarkably good, and most comfortably furnished; and, moreover, nothing could be better than the dinner and the attendance. The hour (three o'clock) was the only thing to which we objected, and this (as it was my favourite riding hour) was so great an inconvenience, that we were, at length, induced, though with the fear of *rechauffé'd* drumsticks and *allongée* soup before our eyes, to come to the decision of dining in future in our own apartments after the table-d'hote hour. We have had no cause to regret the change in our arrangements, nor to lament any diminution in the excellence of our fare: the attendance, too, of the *Irish* servants is remarkably good and *prompt*.

We have found very good riding horses here, and have engaged the same animals for the whole period of our stay: by this arrangement we are

sure of having our horses *tolerably* fresh, and also of giving the poor beasts a day of rest on Sundays, a luxury which they would never otherwise enjoy if left on the seventh day of the week to the tender mercies of American pleasure-seekers. *I* have been fortunate enough to secure the services of a nice, active, well-bred, little chesnut mare; she is rather too much given to pacing, and a *little* shaken by overwork, but she carries me, nevertheless, remarkably well in the few rides we have found in the neighbourhood of the city. The roads here are as level as a bowling-green, but not always *quite* so hard, for (excepting on the *shell* roads) the grassy and sandy lanes and paths which we sometimes explore, are, after a very little rain has fallen, knee deep in thick black mud.

There are two *shell* roads, one on either side of the canal which leads from New Orleans to the lake of Pont Chartrain; they are between three and four miles in length, and, as their name implies, are made of small shells, enormous heaps of which are found on the shores of the lake. The roadside, which is *not* bordered by the canal, is skirted by a thick wood of tall cotton-wood trees; they all stand in water, more or less deep, according to the rains and floods, for the road is considerably raised above the level of the soil on which the trees grow: these trees are thickly covered with the long pendant Spanish moss, which, in its dark

gray hue, gives almost a funereal appearance to the leafless woods. This moss (the Tillandsia Usneodes) is reckoned very destructive to the trees, and I always regret to see it hanging in masses from the branches of the splendid live oaks, which are found scattered about the country. The only enlivenment to the monotony of a ride along the shell road is the passing of barges, and occasionally also of one of the covered passage-boats which are towed along the canal to Lake Pont Chartrain.

Happily for me I have my English saddle with me, for the art of making horse accoutrements of any kind is yet in its infancy in this country. I soon found, however, that if I expected to enjoy any peace, I must relinquish my riding-hat altogether; for no sooner was I mounted than half the *gamins* of the city were at my horse's heels, calling out to their friends, 'Viens donc voir! Voilà une dame avec un chapeau d'homme!' till I was fain to doff my beaver, and to take to a velvet cap, similar to those worn by the Creole ladies.

Among other places of amusement, we visited the race-course, which is a large and very tolerable ground, about two miles from the city. The weather was charming, and the wind being southerly, we could have fancied it June instead of December. On dashed the light equipages, made of nothing in the world but whalebone, and drawn by the swift *running* horses, and going like a 'flash of light-

ning;' and on sped the horsemen, rushing by at full gallop, and hallooing, and whooping, and betting, till I grew perfectly *bewildered* with the confusion and the uproar. At last, we came to the ground, of our vicinity to which we had been warned by the usual request to buy a 'card of the running horses.' There was no entrance through the fence which encloses the course, without paying a dollar each; so having given the money, we thought we should then 'get along,' but no such thing; for twenty yards farther on we were again stopped by a repeated demand for dollars, without which payment we were respectfully told that we could see nothing. At last, we arrived opposite to *the stand.*

Such a mockery as it was of Epsom and Newmarket! The sporting gentlemen of New Orleans, with long hunting-whips in their hands, were clothed in what they seemed, in the ignorance of their hearts, to consider a sort of racing costume; green cutaway coats, with metal buttons, being evidently considered as the 'correct thing' to wear on these *sporting* occasions. The great and knowing men among them, the 'Peels' and 'Grevilles' of their turf, who were looked up to as oracles from having learnt what horse-racing *really was* at New York, had taken possession of the stand, and were laying down the law about a certain 'Lady Sarah' who was to win everything. The 'grand

stand' contained a slight sprinkling of the beauty and fashion of the other sex, but on the whole the entertainment bore, as it should do, a decidedly masculine character. We were invited into the stand to take some refreshment by a very polite gentleman, calling himself one of the stewards; for which civility, though it was refused, I felt duly grateful, till I ascertained that a *consideration* would have been required had the civility been accepted.

At length, the riders came out to be weighed. One was a very old boy indeed, in the shape of a negro, with white hair, and of proportions of a not very diminutive description. The other (there were only two) was also a black, but of very tender years indeed, and their dirty buckskins, and their yellow and red calico jackets contrasted finely with their dark features and their shining black paws. There was immense difficulty in hoisting them on their horses, two wretched raw-boned animals, whose only qualifications for racing seemed to lie in their long square-cut tails, and their fleshless bodies. The two jockeys were evidently (during the last lingering moments allowed them) coming to some private understanding, as to the best manner of conducting the race, the entire meaning of which confederation was known only to themselves. I, however, heard the elder and more knowing one of the two, whisper to the other, 'If you nebber

pass me, Phil, he'll give you five dollar, I expect.' It was but too clear, that the unprincipled old fellow was instilling his horse-racing morality into the innocent mind of the unsuspecting Tyro. I heard no more, for, at that moment, the bell rung, and off they started. And such a start! and such a gallop afterwards! There were two Irish cab-drivers standing near us, for whom the joke was evidently much too good to be passed over quietly. 'Hourra, Murty!" shouted one of them, standing on the wheel of his vehicle, and waving his dilapidated hat in the air—'hourra! and wouldn't you like to be seeing them black fellows at the Curragh?' 'And wouldn't I? that's all,' replied his friend: 'that dacent boy in yaller's well fixed anyhow.' The remark produced such a burst of genuine Hibernian merriment, and the sight of the two 'niggur fellars' straining and thumping along the course was in itself so irresistibly ludicrous, that we, too, were fain to join our mirth, and mingle our laughter with the rest.

Some time ago the diversion of steeple-chasing was much in vogue in America, but the accidental death of one of their best riders has rather cooled their ardour for this species of amusement. I must now close my long letter, and give you a further account of New Orleans life in my next.

# LETTER XXIX.

THE ITALIAN OPERA — QUADROON BALLS — MARRIAGES WITH THE COLOURED PEOPLE — SALE OF QUADROON GIRLS — MR. CLAY — EPISCOPAL CHURCH AT NEW ORLEANS — ELOQUENCE OF THE PREACHER.

*New Orleans—November.*

THE Italian Opera is the favourite resort of the *élite* of New Orleans society. The house is a remarkably pretty one, and the company, which is the same we had once before heard at the Havannah, very respectable. The 'Gazza Ladra' is well performed, and two other operas are already announced as among the amusements of the approaching Carnival, which promises to be a very gay one. The prima donna has been too long a favourite of the public not to give herself airs, and, like many other ladies similarly situated, is very jealous of other female singers of any repute; and if they obtrude their claims to admiration, so as to even dream of usurping her dominion on the boards, she sometimes indulges the audience in fits of tears and passion worthy of the great Grisi herself. But the prettiest *sight* at the opera is

that of the Creole ladies; they never miss a performance, and sit, night after night, in the same place, carrying on their indolent flirtations in the most graceful, listless manner possible. They are the best dressers in the world, usually making their appearance in white, with one bright flower in the masses of their jet black hair, or perhaps a very few splendid diamonds. Their complexions are white as the driven snow, and their eyes, almond-shaped, dark, and sleepy. *I* never saw such eyes or such figures, in any other country; the Spanish women sink to nothing in comparison with them.

The Opera House is not much larger than our theatre in St. James's-street, so that every bright beauty is clearly visible, and the *fraicheur* of her toilette commented upon with as much zest as is bestowed by the Parisian ladies on that important subject. The French Creole ladies are remarkably indolent, and are apt to grow extremely corpulent, when early youth is past: they are very slightly educated, and beyond the subject of dress, I doubt their ideas extending with anything like distinctness. Love-making sometimes occupies them violently for a time, but it requires too much thought and exertion to be ever a very popular amusement with them—'Il parle si bien toilette,' seems to be the highest praise they can bestow on a male acquaintance.

The Quadroon Balls are very much resorted to

by *white* gentlemen, but neither *white* ladies, nor *black* men ever attend them: the reason for this is obvious, and need not be commented upon. I heard that the balls themselves were delightful, the young Quadroons generally doing the honours of their entertainments with great propriety and grace. It is well known that marriage between a white man and the descendant of a negro, in however remote a degree, is not legal in the Slave States: ingenious methods have been found of evading this law; but as a successful employment of such devices, not only subjects the individual so acting to great contempt, but also deprives him of his rights as a citizen, they are very seldom resorted to. Before a marriage can be legally solemnized between a white and a coloured person, the former is required to make oath that he has *coloured* or negro blood in his veins. The difficulty to a white man taking this oath, lies not only in its absolute falsehood, but in the melancholy fact, that by acknowledging the existence of such a stain in his escutcheon, he voluntarily shuts himself out of the pale of communion with his countrymen for ever. Great, however, as is the natural repugnance to this step, it was once taken, and that not very long ago, by a young American, who was resident in New Orleans. A rich merchant and sugar planter, of, I believe, Jewish extraction, had an only child, a daughter, and moreover a

Quadroon of great beauty and accomplishments—to use the most received term. The young lady was the acknowledged heiress of her father's vast wealth, but he refused to bestow either his fortune or his pretty Quadroon on any but a white man, and that in lawful marriage. In spite of the mighty bribe held out, there was found but one man who was daring enough to demand the hand of the lady in marriage, and to be willing to take the oath which was necessary to make that marriage valid in law. With a view, in some sort, to satisfy his scruples of conscience, the suitor of the maiden, previous to his appearing before the authorities, pricked the finger of his fair fiancée, and *inserted* some of the blood which trickled from the wound into a gash which he had previously made in his own hand. After performing this delicate operation, he fearlessly, and with an open front, took a solemn oath, that within his own veins, negro blood was flowing, and was then allowed to claim his bride. But after such an avowal, America was no longer a country for him, so he lost no time in carrying off his rich and lovely bride to far-off (and, in this case, more *liberal*) Europe, for *there* wealth always obtains consideration, and shades of colour are not too closely investigated.

I, in common with other Europeans, who are not accustomed to consider nicely the different

degrees of coloured descent, was often surprised at the infallible accuracy with which the Americans detect the negro origin of these unhappy people. I believe it is chiefly in the *nails*, and in the skin of the upper part of the forehead, that the signs exist, for bright brown hair, a fair complexion, and thin and delicate lips, count for nothing with them as proofs of white descent.

There is a sad story current in New Orleans, of three young quadroon girls, the daughters of a merchant here. This man (who was rich in this world's goods) had followed the almost universal custom, and sent his children to Paris for education; there they grew in beauty and grace, were instructed in all imaginable accomplishments, and were bred up in delicacy and refinement; added to all which advantages, they had mixed with good society, and had enjoyed the amusements suitable to their age and condition. Their father, after their education was completed, sent for them home, with the *intention* of having their freedom properly secured to them according to law. The execution of this righteous resolve, he, however, postponed from day to day, fancying, no doubt, as we are all so apt to do, that he had plenty of time before him, and that his daughters would be *freed women* long before the *accident* of *his* death would otherwise leave them both bondslaves and fatherless. Alas! the improvident man calculated too largely, not only

on the strength of his constitution, but on the amount of his wealth, for he died suddenly, and, what was still more deplorable in its consequences to his unfortunate family, he died *insolvent*. As a necessary consequence of his dying a bankrupt, his property (including in its catalogue his hapless daughters) was seized upon by his creditors, in order to defray as far as possible their claims upon his estate. Then it was that those poor young girls—beautiful, delicate, and talented, as I have described them, were exposed in the slave auction at New Orleans, for *public sale?* I repeat stories as I have heard them, and by no means *vouch* for their truth; but as I have frequently heard the above anecdote told without its truth being ever called in question, I think it fair to conclude that it is *as* true a story as it is a melancholy one.

The system of visiting which is pursued here is very *foreign* in its character, *evening* calls being made both by gentlemen and ladies, with only the necessary *precaution* of first sending in their cards. We have a good many pleasant acquaintances, several of whom are kind enough to visit us in this manner; but amongst the agreeable friends who have come to New Orleans for the winter, Henry Clay stands foremost in his claims to our admiration and regard. As he is a 'public character,' I think I am justified in departing from the rule I have laid down, of not mentioning the names of

individuals, even when writing to you. But Henry Clay is too eminent as a statesman, and withal too remarkable a man in his private character, both for his high talents and his distinguished philanthropy, to be passed over in silence. There is about him a remarkable air of dignity and high breeding; his countenance is full of benevolence and intellect, and his conversational powers are of the highest order. It is for the sake of his health that Mr. Clay is spending the winter here, for to the regret of every one who knows him, and of *most* of those who do not, the constitution of this distinguished man has given symptoms of *breaking*. Of this, however, no one can see a symptom, either in his conversation or in his spirits, which in society are always good; and indeed Mr. Clay often indulges in a vein of humour ('the nonsense of clever men') which is, in my opinion, one of the most pleasant treats we ever enjoy.

The churches at New Orleans are both very numerous and remarkably well filled. There is a Presbyterian church, which is attended principally by the Scotch merchants and their families, and several Episcopalian places of worship. At one of the latter we, with great difficulty, obtained sittings, for, from the extreme popularity of the preacher, his church is filled to overflowing. Dr. H——, who officiates, is a man distinguished all over America for his abilities, which may truly be called

'first rate:' his voice is one of the most powerful, and, at the same time, the most impressive I ever heard, and he enjoys the glorious gift of eloquence in an uncommon degree. His preaching is decidedly what would be called in England, (in these unhappy days of religious dissension,) *high church;* he does not ostensibly deliver his discourses extempore, but I imagine, nevertheless, that very little of the beautiful language which we hear from the eloquent tongue of this remarkable man, is written on the pages before him. There is so much (as it would appear) *unstudied* eloquence in every word he utters, and such bursts of apparently most impromptu metaphor and poetical allusion, that if they are read from a book, they are indeed the very perfection of art.

I have spoken of Dr. H—— more as a great master of the art of declamation, than as a minister of the gospel, preaching humility to the proud, and peace to the troubled in spirit, and this because the virtue of humility and the blessings of peace seem totally unknown and unappreciated here, and as much so perhaps in the pulpit as on the Exchange. Dr. H——'s sermons are admirably logical, and I never heard the great truths of Scripture better dwelt upon, or more convincingly illustrated; his discourses, however, seem invariably addressed to the *heads*, instead of to the *hearts* of his audience; and I confess that, after

listening to one of these *brilliant* sermons, I always left the church more impressed with admiration for the talents of the man, than with a conviction that I had received instruction from the book of truth.

With all this, Dr H—— is, from all I hear, an excellent man, and has the strongest wish to benefit his fellow-creatures; he is said by some to be not devoid of clerical ambition, and indeed he bears the stamp of that passion on his face, which is full of deep thought, of a somewhat *Jesuitical* character. I understand that Dr. H—— was originally educated for the *bar*, in which profession there was every reason to think he would have become eminent; however, after practising for a short time, he abandoned the legal profession, and (I believe) went to England to pursue his clerical studies at one of our universities.

The Liturgy of the Episcopalian church, in America, differs very slightly from that of the Established Church in England; the *Lord's* prayer is twice omitted where it occurs in the English service; and those portions also of the prayers of our church which apply to the royal family, and the institutions peculiar to our country are, of course, left out. The singing is very good, and the interior of the church, though totally devoid of ornament, is handsome and well-proportioned. There are no pews, the congregation being seated on

well arranged benches; and I saw no *poor people*, or any, in short, that did not look as if they *meant* to pass for ladies and gentlemen.

After the prayers were concluded, on the Sunday before Christmas day, Dr. H—— stepped forward, and said aloud, 'Any ladies wishing to ornament the church for Christmas, are requested to call here to-morrow, and make arrangements with me on the subject.' The result of this invitation was, that the next time we entered the church, it was most exquisitely adorned and beautified. Over the plain white walls of the immense building, hung festoons of rare evergreens, *looped* up with camellias and other flowers, while appropriate texts of Scripture appeared on the walls, traced in delicate green with myrtle and pomegranate leaves. The effect of the whole was charming, and was the work of the tasteful ladies of New Orleans, who appear to enter with great zeal into any work which has for its object the beautifying of the church which they attend. There was a collection for the Missionary Society the Sunday after our arrival, and Dr. H——'s impressive exhortation brought down a perfect shower of dollars from the well-filled pockets of the congregation. The New Orleans ladies are most liberal to the poor, and to the suffering families of destitute emigrants,—doing their good in secret, and not letting their left hand know what their right hand doeth.

## LETTER XXX.

INTERESTING PUBLIC SPEECH—STUMP ORATIONS—'PETER PARLEY'—PROSPECT OF WAR—ALARM OF THE SLAVE-OWNERS—DISINCLINATON OF THE UPPER CLASSES TO ENGAGE IN HOSTILITIES WITH ENGLAND.

*New Orleans—November.*

WE have had (I am happy to say) an opportunity since I wrote to you last, of hearing an eloquent harangue from one of the most distinguished public speakers in the United States. The occasion of the *speech* was the Anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers on Plymouth Rock,—a popular theme here, as I have before told you; and the speaker, being himself a New Englander, did the subject ample justice, from *feeling* it, which he evidently did, in his inmost heart. The scene of *action* (for of *that*, there was almost more than enough) was, strange to relate, in a church, not the one we habitually attend, but an episcopalian place of worship, of equally large dimensions. The weather was oppressively warm, and the edifice so crowded, that I hardly

think another human creature could have been crammed into any corner of it. For the first five minutes, I thought it would be impossible to remain in such a crowd and such an atmosphere; but I had not listened long, before I became so spell-bound by the eloquence of the speaker, that I felt I could listen to him for hours.

He commenced with a description of the persecutions which had driven the Pilgrims from their native land, and then he descanted on the virtues of the said *fathers* at great length. Their conduct was contrasted with that of the gold-seeking, and blood-thirsty Spaniards—the merciless conquerors of the south; and then the most interesting points in the history of New England were lightly touched, and commented upon. Of course, the maritime enterprise of his native state was not forgotten, and the exciting incidents of a whaling voyage were beautifully and skilfully treated, from the departure of the adventurous vessels, (those wandering sea-birds born in the wild woods, and fledged upon the wave,) to the capture of the great leviathan of the deep, and the return of the ships to the Port of Plymouth. The orator wound up, as a matter of course, his discourse by extolling the immense amount of liberty, prosperity, and happiness, enjoyed by every citizen of the Union under their 'great and glorious constitution;' but the melody of his voice, and the extreme beauty of

the metaphors he employed, kept the attention fixed, without the slightest effort, for more than two hours. The applause was frequent, and energetic; and not one of the crowded audience showed a symptom of fatigue or inattention.

While praising the virtues of the Pilgrim Fathers, there were a good many rather uncivil remarks made upon poor Charles the First; but on the whole, the mother country received a very proper share of compliment—a rare occurrence in America.

I had, on this occasion, another convincing proof of the gallantry and courtesy of a real American gentleman. The heat in the church was very great, and at one time I felt—to use an American term, which I quote often, as being very expressive—'like fainting;' so much so, as to attract the attention of a plainly-dressed, middle-aged man, who at once, and with considerable difficulty, opened a window near which I was sitting. Now, the window was a church window, and the small panes of glass, encased in a heavy framework of wood, extended upwards to the very ceiling of the lofty building. No sooner had my obliging and *disinterested* friend (for the Americans are not tenacious for themselves of the admission of fresh air) contrived to raise the sash, than he perceived that there were no means of keeping it fast in its new position. Nothing daunted by this discovery, this 'Sir Walter' of the

west, put his shoulder to the wheel, and having 'fixed' the heavy weight of the window-frame on that part of his person, he continued to support it for nearly two hours, with the most uncomplaining patience and good-nature.

Mr. P—— (the orator to whom we had been listening) is considered their most celebrated stump speaker; and the only part of the civilized world, which I should be inclined to quote as that in which his spirited eloquence *might* fail in exciting a proper degree of admiration, is the *wild* portion of the Western States of the Union. The gentlemen from those districts require something more *alcoholic* harangues addressed to them; something, in short, in the style of the following, which may be regarded as a good specimen of a western 'stump speech:'*—'Americans! The great country —wide—vast—and in the south-west unlimited! Our republic is yet destined to *re-annex* South America—to occupy the Russian possessions, and again to recover possession of those British provinces, which the power of the old thirteen colonies won from the French on the Plains of Abraham—all rightfully ours to *re-occupy!* Faneuil Hall was its cradle! but whar, whar, will be found timber enough for its coffin! Scoop all the water

* This term is applied to orations in the far west on account of the situation generally offering no better rostrum than the stump of a felled tree.

out of the Atlantic ocean, and its bed would not afford a grave sufficient for its corpse—and, yet, America has scarcely grown out of the gristle of boyhood. Europe—which is Europe! She's nowhar—nothing—a circumstance—a cypher—a bare absolute ideal! We have faster steam-boats, swifter locomotives, larger creeks, bigger plantations, better mill privileges, broader lakes, higher mountains, deeper cataracts, louder thunder, forkeder lightning, braver men, hansummer *wee-men*, more money than England dar have!' Compared with such a speech as this, the moderate language and the refinement of Mr. P——'s discourse must seem tame indeed.

As this will be my last letter to you, before we embark for Texas, I must give you a short account of one more morning assembly, at which we have *assisted*, one quite as interesting as the last, though of a widely different character. 'Peter Parley' (the Peter Parley of the west) had arrived at New Orleans! And I was glad to have an opportunity of seeing this friend of every American and English child, and the author of some of the prettiest and most instructive works ever penned for juvenile understanding.* The real name of 'Peter

* I find the original 'Peter Parley' (Mr. Goderich) is not the author of half the books which bear his *nom-de-guerre*, he having a most successful English rival in the author of 'Peter Parley's Annual,' &c.

Parley' is Goderich, and he is by birth a New Englander, and has been, as we were informed, an *instructor*—in other words, he formerly earned his livelihood by keeping a school. We were kindly invited by one of our acquaintances to a *dejeuner* at which this gentleman was to be present; and not only he, but about two hundred young ladies and gentlemen, between the ages of three and ten, who were on this occasion to be presented to the 'children's friend.'

It was altogether a very pretty sight, for the rising generation, beautifully dressed, were waiting in mute expectation the arrival of the man whom they seemed to regard beforehand with a respect almost amounting to awe, and the pretty French Creoles were lounging about, and taking everything so quietly—what *they* expected, I know not; but, as for myself, having so often admired the simplicity and the more than parental kindness contained in the author's works, I confess I was not at all prepared for the impersonification of the ideal Peter Parley, who, on a joyful cry from all the children of 'Here he comes!' entered the room. Who could have expected to see in the children's friend a 'ci-devant jeune home,' who had evidently been endeavouring to look twenty years younger than he really was; and I really felt quite disappointed at the sad reality. Farewell to my visions of snow-white hair—mild and benevolent brow, and

gentle dignity! There stood Peter Parley before me, (author as he was of 'Tales about Travels,' and 'Shipwrecks,' and 'Good Children,') and I could hardly believe my eyes. The snug brown wig, and the stiff satin stock, as completely destroyed *my* illusions, as I am convinced they did those of the bewildered children by whom he was surrounded, and I felt at once assured that neither to them nor to myself could he ever be (even as an author) what he had been.

No time was lost (it never is in America) in making him a speech, to which the 'lion' of the moment listened with much complacency; for in the course of it there was read an imaginary letter from an English child, in which letter the said juvenile correspondent was made to hazard the opinion that 'no one in England ever *had* written such books, and that, moreover, no one (Peter Parley himself always excepted) *would ever* be found in the world capable of writing such books again. This was all highly satisfactory to Mr. Parley, but I confess that I should have been much more bored than amused had it not been for the agreeable companionship of Mr. Clay, whose entertaining remarks and quick perception of the ridiculous prevented anything like tedium being felt. When the address was over, and Peter Parley's best bow also, I was in some hopes that he would make a neat and appropriate speech to

the children in reply, one suited to their capacities, and calculated to reinstate him in their good opinion. But nothing of the kind was attempted; for whether it was owing to the presence of the distinguished statesman above alluded to, or because the Americans *cannot* refrain from the amiable weakness of overpraising their country, he thought it necessary to harp on the old subject—viz., the wealth, power, riches, honour, and glory, of the United States; talking over the heads of the poor children in such utter forgetfulness of their age and tastes, that (*having heard the subject discussed before*) we very soon took our departure with our party.

The whole population of the country seems just at present to be animated with a most warlike spirit. Hostilities with Mexico are proclaimed, troops are being organized, and drillings, and martial sounds, greet our eyes and ears at every turn. The *sanguine* nature of the Americans was never more apparent than in their views and anticipations of the approaching struggle. Poor Mexico is to be 'catawhampously chawed up,' and the inspiriting air of 'Yankee Doodle' is to resound through the 'halls of the Montezumas.' The war will cost them dear, but though fully aware of the fact, they *pretend* to be perfectly prepared for a contest with another and a far more powerful opponent. 'Great Britain must relinquish her

claims, or by —— we must have war.' This is the burden of the song which is in every one's mouth, and yet it is at the same time very evident that the majority do not feel at all easy or comfortable about the state of affairs.

The owners of slaves and sugar plantations are, most of them, decidedly alarmed at the prospect of a war with England: they seem to consider it as quite certain, that in the event of hostilities being commenced, the English government would send black troops from the West Indies in order, through *their* instrumentality, to incite the slaves to revolt. We tell them that the danger exists solely in their own imaginations, and that England is too great to stoop to such base measures. They will not, however, believe that our government would omit so *good* an opportunity of carrying on the war with advantage to themselves in the very heart of the enemy's country. I can imagine nothing more frightful than a general revolt of the slave population in this country. They are (especially on the plantations) in such a vast majority in proportion to the numbers of the white men, that the effects of insubordination would be most disastrous. An indiscriminate massacre by the slaves is what most of the planters fear would be the result, in the event of black troops being about to land in Louisiana. But, in the midst of this panic, we can see that there are many among the

slave-owners who trust implicitly to the good faith and affection of their negroes, and who are persuaded that, in case of any personal danger to themselves, their vassals would be ready to defend them with their lives. This seems a very agreeable conviction, and, in all probability, those who entertain this opinion are justified in doing so, by the kindness they have shown towards those in whom they place such unlimited confidence. At the same time, when we consider the nature of the black population, and their aptitude to be excited by others, (who, flushed with success, and possessed of a strong desire for freedom, would naturally use every effort to gain them over to their side,) I think you will agree with me that the danger, even of those who *do* possess attached slaves, would be very imminent. Happily, there seems at present little likelihood of any troubles or horrors of the kind; and it is greatly to be hoped that it will be long before the rapacity and encroaching spirit of either party shall give rise to disagreements and hostilities, which (however they may end) must, while they continue, be productive of great evils to both parties.

When one considers the diversity of interests of the different States, and the jealousies which in consequence naturally exist between them, one cannot help remarking, without some degree of surprise, the unanimity which suddenly springs up

among them when threatened with a common danger. All their domestic grievances are at once forgotten, and all parties *appear* willing to support their national glory, even at the expense of a war with the whole remaining portion of the world. I have said *appear*, because it would be difficult to believe that they can feel thus in reality; for the South cannot be ignorant that even a short war with the mother country would altogether ruin her slave-owners and cotton-growers. A great proportion of the North and West are certainly advocates for war; for in that case the former would supply the whole of the Union with her manufactures, and the agricultural population of the latter are so inveterate in their antipathies to Europe, (the land they have abandoned,) that they would be willing even to sacrifice their private interests for the sake of gratifying their animosity.

I may, however, safely aver, that all the rational and thinking men, and nearly all the great merchants and ship-owners—those, in short, who have anything to lose—would consider a war with Great Britain as the greatest disaster that could befal them. War is a more expensive pastime in the United States than it is in any other country in the world. The equipment, pay, and transport of her militia, can none of them be effected economically, and no government is so liberal in its mode of conducting operations. Moreover, every one seems to

consider it perfectly fair to take every advantage of the executive, and many a man who might possibly feel some slight degree of reluctance in taking in his neighbour, has no hesitation whatever in 'doing Uncle Sam.'

We are now on the point of starting for Texas, so I shall close my letter.

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## LETTER XXXI.

MONSIEUR DE T——N—DEPARTURE FOR TEXAS—VOYAGE DOWN THE RIVER — ROUGH PASSAGE TO GALVESTON — ARRIVAL AND RECEPTION THERE — DISGUST OF THE FRENCH 'NOBLEMEN — LAST PRESIDENT OF THE COUNTRY—THE EX-PRESIDENT HOUSTON—WRETCHED CONDITION OF THE EMIGRANTS—TREMONT HOTEL—EPISCOPAL CHURCH—GERMAN EMIGRANT—SOME ACCOUNT OF THE STATES OF TEXAS.

*Galveston—January.*

AMONG the foreigners, German and French, counts and barons, who from time to time take up their temporary quarters at the St. Louis Hotel, I must not forget to make honourable mention of the old Marquis de T——n, a member of the Montmorenci family, and withal a Legitimist, and an advocate *outre mésure* for all that savours of the *ancien regime*. It may seem matter of wonder how the old man (for he is nearly fourscore years of age) could have chanced to find himself a sojourner in the United States; but Monsieur de T——n, unlike the generality of French Marquises, is a man of very large fortune, and having, as he said, met with

severe family misfortunes, he had rightly concluded that the greater the change produced by travelling in his habits and mode of life, the more likely it was to prove beneficial in chasing away the memory of his sorrows. He did not travel alone, being accompanied by his private secretary, and attended by several servants. All his ideas and habits (except that he took snuff in tremendous quantities) were aristocratic, and *as* a *marquess*, a real, living, and tangible *nobleman*, he was welcomed with open arms by the *kind-hearted* Americans. I sometimes fancied that the poor old gentleman was writing a book, so much perseverance did he display, not only in making notes in his common-place book, but in asking the most searching questions of every one he met. It is a favourite joke of the Americans—not a *very* judicious one, I think—to make the most extraordinary and extravagant replies to the queries of strangers; in the case of the old marquess, there was nothing too wonderful for *them* to say, or for *him*, in the simplicity of his heart, to believe; and whether from this, or from other causes, I certainly perceived that he grew more *bitter* against the 'greatest country on earth' every day he remained in it. Monsieur de T——n was our constant guest, for he sent in his card every evening with such an irresistible appeal to our compassion, in the shape of an inquiry as to whether he might not have

*l'honneur de faire ses compliments à Madame,* that we almost always admitted him.

As the time drew near for our Texan trip, I confess I looked forward with great pleasure to seeing again the country in which we had before made so interesting a sojourn; and, moreover, I was glad to find that we were to go in the 'Galveston,' quite a new steamer, and not one of those which, three years ago, I had not thought by any means in their prime. In this new steamer, therefore, we secured our berths, and no sooner had we done so, than our friend, 'the Marquess,' did the same; so away we steamed, one bright December evening, down the thickly flowing Mississippi—ourselves, Monsieur de T——u, Monsieur le Secretaire, and suite, for the 'happy hunting grounds.' Our steamer was a very fine boat to look at, particularly *inside;* but she was long, narrow, and shallow, and much better suited to the navigation of rivers, than to encounter the fierce 'northers' of the Gulf of Mexico. She was fitted up with the choicest woods, birds'-eye maple and rose, and the decorations of the saloon were really beautiful; there was, however, (as we soon found) a great deal too *much above* water, and far too little below, for either safety or comfort. The steamer literally consisted of three *stories,* one more than the ordinary river boats; I preferred sleeping in the *attic,* and so, I think, did most of the passengers, but the weather

was so mild and warm, that as long as we continued in the river, almost every one remained in the open-air.

There is rather a fine building, and on a very large scale, about six miles from New Orleans, which, I was told, is the convent of Sacré Cœur, and some miles below it is the ground where the battle of New Orleans was fought; I looked at the latter with painful interest, I assure you. We arrived at the South-west Pass late in the evening, and had to wait for several hours before we could get over the bar at the mouth of the river. I never beheld anything more dreary than that low, reedy, marshy shore, as (under the fitful light of a cold December moon) we gazed upon it from the hurricane deck: it looked *so* desolate, *so* blown upon, and *so* defenceless!

When once fairly over the bar, and in the open sea, we found that it was blowing pretty fresh, and also that the good ship 'Galveston' rode by no means easily in heavy weather. I never heard a vessel make such a noise as she did through that remarkably disagreeable night, for the wind, from having been southerly, turned suddenly into a 'norther,' and continued to freshen, so that before morning there was more than half a gale of wind. Every timber and bulk-head creaked, and complained in a most painful manner; the motion, too, was most disagreeable, and the sense of insecurity very great,

owing as much to the above causes as to the drunkenness of the captain, who was in a state of intoxication the whole time we were on board. I soon missed our friends, the Frenchmen, at least their faces ceased to be present, but I suspected that some bundles of cloaks, heaped on the two sofas of the upper saloon, were the coverings of their suffering frames. At length, day dawned upon our miseries, and brought to light some ugly spectacles; and it was such a bright, joyous looking sunrise, that it made us all look still more cross and frightful than we should perhaps otherwise have done; but Galveston was nearly in sight, so all the passengers woke themselves up, as well as they could, and commenced their preparations for departure.

One or two rather rough-looking individuals were soon busily employed in sharpening their Bowie knives, an operation, as it appeared to me, of rather an ill-omened nature, and a few passengers, more peaceably disposed, were thinking of breakfast. But breakfast on board *any* steamer is an odious thing, and as we had seen enough of the corn bread, salt butter, 'Boston crackers,' and sticky molasses, we resolved to wait till we had crossed the bar, and to 'make it breakfast,' when we should arrive at the Tremont Hotel. As we approached the low sandy shore of Galveston Island, we perceived a great many merchant-

vessels lying outside the bar, the captains, or supercargoes preferring to unload their freight *there*, to running the hazard of crossing the formidable impediment at the mouth of the harbour. We were soon agreeably surprised by the visible improvement which had taken place in the appearance of the place since our former visit, and as we gently steamed over the bar at half-speed, we saw how much the *city* had increased in size, and what a busy air pervaded the harbour of Galveston.

As we touched the pier, I saw some familiar faces among the crowd standing on the quay, and amongst others was *Captain* Cary, the negro livery-stable-keeper, with his black woolly head, shaped like a sugar-loaf, and his countenance of singular rascality and cunning; he lost no time in asking for custom, and was very anxious to know, if 'Massa Cap'em didn't want some berry fine osses, or carriages fixed first-rate.' There, too, was our pilot of former days, and the polite pier-master, all unfeignedly glad to see us, and eager, after the fashion of the country, to shake hands with my companion, and bid us welcome to Galveston. *Captain* S——, the landlord of the *Tree-mont*, lost no time in conducting us to his hotel, which has greatly increased in size, and is now an immense building, and, having cheered us with many glad greetings, and *solicitations*, on our return to Texas, he installed us in our new apartments.

We—that is to say, the 'Galveston' passengers, and ourselves—met at breakfast in the table-d'hôte room, an apartment of gigantic proportions, and in which two hundred persons might easily have sat down to dinner. I never saw any one appear more thoroughly disgusted with his situation than the old Marquis on that occasion, except perhaps the hapless secretary, whose sensations of misery might almost be said to rival those of his companion. The former took his place near me, looked daggers at a great flat piece of beef, as large and nearly as hard as an ancient shield, and after contriving to swallow an *œuf à la coque*, confided to me that he felt convinced of the impossibility of longer endurance, and that he had taken his passage back to New Orleans in the 'Galveston, which gallant ship was to return to that port the same evening. 'Ma foi,' said he, 'c'est vraiment trop fort ce Galveston—comment diable! il n'y a rien ici, pas même une cuisine française, rien que la mer, et des messieurs en *Poncio* Mexicain.' In vain I strove to convince my aged friend, that it was a charming country, and that an excursion into the prairies would fill his mind with new sensations of delight and wonder, and that 'La cuisine Française' was not *quite* indispensable to existence. It would not do, the aggrieved and disappointed man took a walk round the town, inserted some very *fractious* notes in his common-place book,

made us some very low bows, and then took his leave of Galveston for ever.

We received a visit soon after our arrival from a very agreeable acquaintance, who had formerly been (during the time that Texas *was* an independent Republic) Chargé d'Affaires from that power to the Court of the Tuilleries. We received him with much pleasure, not only on account of his universally acknowledged talents, but as one who, from his peculiar position, was enabled to tell us something of the present state of Texan affairs. This country is now in a state of transition, it having been for some months virtually a State of the Union, though the formalities of annexation have not yet been consummated. The President, Mr. Anson Jones, has not yet been *dethroned:* he is a most excellent, straightforward, talented, and honourable man, and is at present in Galveston, awaiting with perfect composure the course of events, which are to lead to his dismissal into private life. He spent one most pleasant evening with us at the Tremont, as did also our diplomatic friend, and the English minister, whose unexpected arrival we had hailed with great delight. We could boast of but *two* rush-bottomed chairs in our little apartment, so the President of the country was obliged to content himself with a travelling trunk by way of seat, and I could not help thinking, that if there is 'a divinity which doth

hedge a king,' it was hard there should be so little of it for a *President:* the late honourable Chargé d'Affaires chose the foot of the bed, as the most comfortable seat, and as for England's gallant Representative, he had, of course, the place of honour—namely, a chair with three legs, of a very insecure description. The conversation turned principally on the policy or impolicy of the measure (now nearly concluded) of swamping the Republic of Texas in that of the United States, and a good deal of doubt was expressed as to whether annexation would be likely, *permanently*, to benefit the interests of the former country. The fact is, however, undeniable, that since the idea has been seriously entertained, the increase of emigration to Texas has been very considerable, and also, that (for the moment at least) the affairs of this country are apparently in a very flourishing condition. How long, under the new order of things, this prosperity may last, remains to be proved; in the meantime, the pride of many of the original contenders for the independent freedom of the young Republic is deeply wounded, and they do not at all seem to be of opinion, that the privilege of living under the protection of 'Uncle Sam,' can possibly compensate for the mortification of bearing his yoke.

It must not be supposed, that the proceedings of the late President Houston escaped our notice;

on the contrary, we spent a good deal of time in discussing the merits of the conqueror of Santa Anna, and learned, in the course of conversation, that he is senator-elect for the *State* of Texas in the American senate. Many interesting anecdotes were told of him—anecdotes which would, I dare say, have impressed me with a greater degree of respect for the dignity of the man, as president of an independent republic, had not the ex-Parisian Chargé d'Affaires allowed us to penetrate a *little* too far behind the scenes. It was after dinner, otherwise the *Diplomatist* would not, in all probability, have been thrown so much off his guard; but after repeating to us some really remarkable expressions used, and opinions delivered, by General Houston, he destroyed the effect of all, by adding—'*I shared his bed* with him you know, and as he was fond of talking, the president often told me, at night, a good many of his secrets, and kept me awake sometimes for hours, when I wanted to go to sleep.'

A great many changes have taken place since our last visit to Galveston; the number of German emigrants who *have* poured in, and are still coming in whole ship loads to the country is immense, and they are existing, poor creatures! in wretched, suffering crowds, crammed into temporary wooden houses, built on the damp prairie in the immediate neighbourhood of Galveston, and undergoing

all the miseries arising from sickness, and the want of wholesome, and sufficient food. The river steamers take them up the country, with as little delay as possible, but many die where they are landed, and thus escape the prolongation of the misery which would otherwise await them; it is melancholy to reflect that their inability to lay in the necessary supplies of provisions, and their certainty of finding no home prepared to shelter them from the inclemency of the weather, should make their death appear a positive blessing.

Who would not grieve over the sorrowful sight that we daily have to witness! The poor women, still retaining their national costume, bareheaded, and ill-clothed, are most of them surrounded by shivering children, and are almost destitute of the means of subsistence, while the men are always out shooting, endeavouring in this manner to procure some slight repast for their hungry families; but as *human* beings have increased in the little island, the wild animals have become proportionately scarce, and the daily search of the German emigrants for food, fully accounts to us for the diminution of game on the island. We were wofully disappointed on our first 'sporting excursion' to find how very little there was left to shoot. Everything has been destroyed, or scared away by the hungry Germans, and no living creature is now to be seen but a pelican or two on the shore,

watching the approach of its prey, and some little white sand-pipers tapping their beaks into the wet sand, and scudding along with redoubled activity at our approach. The bayons, or arms of the sea, which formerly stretched far into the interior of the island, are no longer in existence; either the sands of the sea-shore have shifted, or some other cause has operated to effect this transformation, but certain it is, that whereas, three years ago, our rides were circumscribed by these natural boundaries, we can now canter for miles in every direction without being stopped by any such impediments.

Business has evidently greatly increased here, the stores are now numerous, and display articles of luxury before unknown in this wild spot; and the 'restaurants' are neither few nor untempting in appearance. All this speaks well for Galveston, but still wise and far-seeing people shake their heads, and say it is too good to last, and that New Orleans will very soon swallow up all the trade of this now prosperous *city*.

We found that here, as at New Orleans, the *ordinary* was at so inconvenient an hour that we often gladly availed ourselves of the possibility of having our dinner in our own apartments. The public dinner at the Tremont is a curious scene to witness, for many of the men are dressed in what are called blanket coats of every colour under the sun—scarlet, pea-green, and sky-blue—while others

again make their appearance wrapped in the graceful folds of the many-coloured Mexican Poncio, which is flung with apparent carelessness over the shoulder. I have no doubt that mine host of the Tremont would gladly dispense with the presence of some of these gentlemen, as he has frequently considerable difficulty in persuading them to pay their score; but of all his bad customers, the one he most dreads is a '*hard-up Yankee*,' one of those *smart* penniless gentlemen, who make a merit of *shaving* any one who is weak enough to be taken in by them.

Our landlord told us of an individual of this description, who had one morning, long before the breakfast hour, poked his knife-like countenance into the large dining-room of the Tremont, and called a 'Boy.' He was a traveller, evidently from the Northern States, and was attired in a green blanket coat, and an unmistakably Yankee hat: 'I say,' he called out, 'what's to pay here for breakfast?' The waiter named the sum. 'And how much for dinner?'—'Half a dollar.'—'And supper, how much do you expect to get for that?' Having received the reply, and ascertained that the meal called *supper* was the cheapest to be had for money, the provident Yankee laid down his hat, seated himself at the table, and delivered his orders: 'Well, I expect *that's* what I want. I say, you 'coon-faced fellow, (to an Irishman who

stood awaiting his decision,) bring me some supper, and look alive!'

If it is curious to see the somewhat fanciful costumes in the public room of the hotel, it is still more remarkable when they are collected together in the Episcopal church, where they show by their respectful and quiet demeanour that, notwithstanding the usual recklessness of manner of these *struggling* people, they *can* testify deep veneration when in the house of God. The service in that wooden church, which is built on a sand-bank, and in a place so recently peopled by anything like civilized beings, is beautifully and reverentially performed. The clergyman is an Irishman by birth, and is an eloquent preacher, and the church, one of considerable size, is well filled. The singing is really beautiful; and here, as at New Orleans, the ladies have decorated the church with evergreen, formed into appropriate texts from Scripture.

After the service, we entered the Roman-catholic chapel, where mass was being performed, of which circumstance we were warned as we approached by the tinkling of the little bell in the interior of the building. It is a very small and unadorned chapel, but within it stood the white robed and tonsured priest before the altar, which, lowly as it appeared, was raised with humble trust to the honour of the Creator. There were two candles burning before

a small picture of the Crucifixion, and a good many of the poor Germans were meekly kneeling before the altar, and worshipping God after their own faith, in the strange (and as it must appear to them inhospitable) land to which they have fled from the increasing poverty of their own.

The responses of the exiles rose in hushed and tremulous sounds to the roof of the storm-rocked chapel, and near me knelt a fair German girl, with large tears falling silently down her cheeks, while just beyond her was a group which excited still more my sympathy and commiseration. A mother, careworn, sad, and weeping, was on her knees praying fervently, whilst around her were her children, who seemed almost as fully alive to the desolateness of their position as herself. It was, indeed, a painful sight to witness, they looked so poor, so friendless, and so forlorn.

Faint not, O weary mother! faint not yet,
Bear well thy burthen till thy sun shall set;
Arouse thy courage—struggle bravely on,
So shall thy earthly fight be well and nobly won!

Though from thy Fatherland the seas divide thee,
To the Immortal shores thy faith shall guide thee;
The wearied ones shall there in joy unite,
And leave this darkened world for realms of endless light.

*There*, there is peace, for in our Father's house
Are many mansions; then at once arouse
Thy heart, and lifting up thy trembling hands,
Await thy call to join the Heavenly Bands.

*Hope* and *Believe*—the holy words were spoken
To sinners sorrowing and spirit broken—
'Go, fail no more, thy errors are forgiven,
*I* go before to claim thy place in heaven.'

Then mother! draw thy weeping children near,
Teach them to smile, and dry each falling tear,
For to the feeble lamb the desert winds are stilled,
And for the trusting ones the empty cruse is filled.

Go forth and prosper—may thy lot be cast
In pleasant places—and when years have past,
May children's children yet have cause to bless,
The faith their mother treasured in the wilderness.

M. C. H.

I was far too much overcome by the feelings, which the sight of those poor emigrants called up, to remain where I was, so I left the chapel; but, alas, I could not escape the sight of human suffering, for *there*, exposed to the cold north wind, and the now-commencing sleety rain, stood the temporary sheds of the poor emigrants, the thin planks of which they were built affording but little shelter from the tempest, and the pools of standing water before their doors heralding the fever which, when warm weather should come, would be certain to break out among them!

These unfortunate emigrants have come out with the intention of settling in the German colony, called 'New Braunfells,' which is being established in the north-west part of Texas. The section of the country in which this colony is situated, cannot, I believe, be surpassed, in regard to climate,

by any country in the world; but it is very much *out of the way*, the first settlers having placed themselves as far from a market as possible; there is, as I am told, no means of conveying their produce, either by land or water, to any place where purchasers are likely to be found, and this is a very serious drawback to prosperity. If they manage to struggle through their difficulties for a year or two, they will, in all probability, *after that*, enjoy the *necessaries* of life in abundance; but, in the wilderness in which they have pitched their tents, their labour will never make them rich.

There can be no doubt that at some future time Texas will become one of the wealthiest states of the union: it has upwards of three hundred miles of coast bordering on the Gulf of Mexico, and it extends in a north-westerly direction for nearly seven hundred miles till it is bounded by the lower ranges of the rocky mountains. From that elevated region down to the Gulf of Mexico, the surface of the country presents a gradually inclined plane, which is watered by several large rivers, running parellel to each other, and about sixty miles apart. The state of Texas covers an area of nearly five hundred thousand square miles, and there is every reason to believe that no other country in the world can surpass it in the productiveness of its soil, and in the salubrity of its climate. It contains three distinct sections of

country, each of which differs singularly from the others, in regard to climate, soil, and surface. They are called the *low*, the *rolling*, and the *hilly countries*.

The first of these is the country bordering on the Gulf of Mexico, and extending inland to a distance of from fifty to seventy miles: its surface is perfectly level, and its soil generally is a rich alluvial deposit of the most productive nature. The climate of this part of the country is decidedly unhealthy for Europeans, and its lands can be cultivated by *slave labour alone*. This level tract is succeeded by the rolling prairies, so called from the surface being gently undulating, like the waves of the sea; and this section extends from one hundred and fifty to three hundred miles—in short, as far as the Red River on the north, and on the north-west to the spurs of the rocky mountains, which constitute the *third*, or *hilly region*. It is the *middle* division, or rolling country, which (as I have before said) unites within itself the mighty advantages of richness of soil and healthiness of climate: moreover, the beauty of its scenery is very worthy of remark. The general appearance of the prairies is that of a fine English park, beautifully diversified with wood and pasture land, the latter being embellished by an endless variety of flowering plants. But you will be tired of hearing so much of the wild unsettled state of Texas. The

greater part of this interesting and beautiful country is still uninhabited, and it will, doubtless, be many years before the riches which are contained in what is now a wilderness and a desert, shall be brought to light by the hand of man, and properly and duly appreciated. We are now preparing for an excursion into the interior, so I shall send off my letter to New Orleans to be forwarded to you.

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## LETTER XXXII.

EXPEDITION TO NEW WASHINGTON—DOMESTIC LIFE UP THE COUNTRY—UNHEALTHY MODE OF LIFE —THE GERMAN GEOLOGIST—SUGAR COUNTRY—A DINNER ENGAGEMENT IN THE PRAIRIE—DISTRESSING SITUATION OF THE MAN OF SCIENCE.

*New Washington—January.*

AMONG the many kind invitations which we have received, was one from Colonel M——, the proprietor of a large estate up the country, called New Washington. Our friend has taken an active and distinguished part in the Texan struggle for independence, and is not a little mortified by the turn which affairs have taken, and by the merging of the 'Lone Star' in the stars and stripes of the Union. Colonel M—— was on his way up to his own place, which is situated at the head of the bay of Galveston, and about thirty-five miles from the island, so that our journey was to be performed by water; and we were also to have among our party both the ex-Charge d'Affaires, and the English Minister; the latter of whom was bound for Washington, and had hired a light car-

riage and a pair of horses to convey him across the dreary swamps of the 'Brazos Bottom.'

We were all on board at sunset, and happily the weather was fine, so that we were enabled to take up our station on the balcony, in the stern of the vessel. A river steamer in Texas is never a very pleasant thing to inhabit, nor were the charms of *ours* increased by her being forced to contain a good many more passengers than, when originally constructed, she was intended to carry.

Still, all we saw was amusing from its novelty, so, as the bright moon shone clearly out on the frosty night, we wrapped ourselves up in our cloaks, and defied discomfort of any kind either to depress our spirits or to affect our tempers. I must admit, however, that on such occasions as these there are *some* things rather trying to the best constituted minds, and among them I shall mention first the *loud breathing* (I use a mild term) of the sleeping passengers around us, and, secondly, the evils entailed upon unfortunate travellers by the use of *two*, and even of *one*, pronged forks. To the indigenous inhabitants of the country this last evil is a matter of perfect indifference, as *they* generally use a knife *par préference*, but to *us*, who are less ingenious in the art of using the latter article, the inconvenience is very great. Salt spoons were also a luxury as yet unknown in Texas, they having hitherto travelled no further south than New Or-

leans, and even *there* they are not in very general demand.

It was two o'clock in the morning when we reached New Washington. The moon had sunk far behind the forest trees, and it was quite dark when we touched the landing, which is about a quarter of a mile from the house; but, notwithstanding the inky obscurity of the night, we were soon safely landed, and (to the number of six) made our way to the house of our entertainer. Our host is a widower, but his son, and his son's wife, live with him, of which I had been totally unaware till I was casually informed of it on approaching the house, and also of the fact that we were taking the *home* party completely by surprise. It was too late to retrace our steps, and not being as yet initiated into the warm-hearted character of settler hospitality, I could only regret very much what we were doing, and determine to mollify the anticipated displeasure of the lady of the house to the best of my power. It was far too dark, as we approached, to see anything of the exterior of the wooden houses, (for there were two of them,) but it was a great comfort to find in the large but scantily furnished room into which we were ushered, a blazing wood fire burning on the hearth—the best possible welcome, as we agreed, on such an intensely cold night as we had spent in the open air on the steamer's deck.

It was now between three and four in the morning, and the lady, whom I confess I dreaded to see, had long ago retired to rest, but she sent me word that she would get up immediately; and though I earnestly begged that she would remain where she was, the only words I could extract from the little sleepy black attendant were, 'Miss ull come in right away.' Five minutes afterwards, she glided into the room, wrapped in a white morning gown, and with her jet black hair carelessly tucked behind her ears, and words of the warmest welcome on her lips. She was a very pretty creature, under twenty I should say, but her countenance bore traces of early care, and the languor which was visible in every movement, betrayed ill health and suffering. It did not take long to make the discovery that our young hostess was possessed of one of the many kindly hearts which are encountered with such joy and gratitude in distant and half-civilized countries; she was a northern American, and one who, born and bred among the comforts and luxuries of more polished society, was but ill calculated, either from nature or education, to rub successfully through the trials and difficulties of a prairie life. She had married (as they all do in America) when a perfect child in years, and at seventeen was brought into the wilds of Texas to superintend a slave household, and to live upon *corn dodgers*. The consequences of this early

initiation into the trials and troubles of life were, as may be supposed, sad enough; but the instance of the fair young creature at New Washington, is only *one* among the many who lose their health and their spirits in the strange mode of life to which they are, without preparation and so very prematurely, condemned.

*Mrs. Kosciusko M*—— lost no time in conducting us to our sleeping apartment, which, if not luxuriously furnished, was very comfortable; and, having left us with a kind 'Good night,' a little 'darky' of about twelve years of age ('Tempe' by name) alone remained, waiting about, partly from motives of curiosity, and partly in obedience to an order from her mistress to attend to all our wants and wishes. Now, *Tempe* was very black and shining indeed, with a woolly head, small, and extremely round, like that of a large black pin, and she had withal a thin, lathy body, covered with a scanty garment of what is technically called, 'negro clothing.' Tempe's principal employment was that of endeavouring to keep the little grandchild of our host out of mischief, and this, as the said grandchild, by name Kosciusko, had a decided leaning towards freedom, and was of 'no account' whatever, as far as quietness and obedience went, was no easy task. The *two* accordingly played from morning till night, and as there were plenty more dark coloured domestics, all equally indulged

with the little black slave, and all fully as indolent, it may well be believed that the order of the household was not very strictly kept.

We had the satisfaction of finding our beds excellent, and, indeed, this is almost invariably the case in America, as well in private houses as in the hotels, and even the steam-boats. It was late in the day before we awoke from our slumbers, and as from our window we could but just catch a glimpse of the bay, we soon hurried out to ascertain what we could of the *locale*. The situation which has been chosen for the *château* is a charming one, being within fifty yards of the summit of the bluffs, which rise perpendicularly from the waters of the bay, and which are here upwards of a hundred feet in height. New Washington is, as I said before, at the head of the bay, and these bluffs may be said to indicate the commencement of the St. Jacinto River, although, in front of the house, the water is at least a mile in width. The house itself is surrounded by fine trees, and some of the magnolias are really magnificent. After passing for about a quarter of a mile through a belt of wood, you come to the open prairie, which is very prettily diversfied by clumps of trees, but the surface is as level as the ocean in a dead calm.

Our mode of life is as follows: We breakfast at nine on hot-corn bread, and pork dressed in various ways; there is, moreover, good milk and eggs, tea

and coffee. We dine at two, on roast pork, boiled ditto, and corn bread, and at seven o'clock in the evening we sup on the same. The food is spread before us in profusion, and, as I before said, our welcome has been the very warmest possible; moreover, we have horses *caught* for us whenever we wish to ride, rifles provided for shooting, and fishing rods at our disposal if we should feel inclined to try our luck in catching any of the numerous fish with which the bay abounds. Our host keeps a regular 'hunter' in his establishment, not the *quadruped* so called in England, but a human *half-bred,* who is renowned for his skill in all field sports, and whose only ostensible business is to *lasso* the wild horses when they are required, and to kill game when it is wanted. Within a short distance of the house, and all over Colonel M——'s extensive estate, game of many kinds is found—deer, prairie birds, hares, &c., and yet with all these varieties of excellent food within their reach, (besides the produce of the poultry yard,) will it be believed that our hosts are content to live upon fat pork, and fat pork alone, every day of their lives?

They are all ill, all out of spirits, and apparently weary of their existence, and this entirely from the unhealthy mode of life which is common, more or less, all over America. In vain do I endeavour to instil into their minds, that the indulging three

times a day in the *luxury* of fat, greasy pork and molasses, with the overpowering accompaniment of hot 'dough doings,' is enough to lay low the strongest man that ever breathed the breath of life. My arguments are of no avail, for the 'niggers' are greatly too much indulged, and the masters too indolent either to plant vegetables, shoot game, or catch fish, so the demon of dyspepsia having at New Washington taken seven other spirits more wicked than himself, dwells here unrestrained. The unhappy Kosciusko the elder sits on one side the chimney-corner, wrapped in his blanket-coat, for hours together, and groaning with the possession of the familiar but malignant spirit, whilst the still more suffering, but patient wife rocks herself on the opposite side throughout the livelong day, and, as she says, 'cries for company.'

Among the numerous guests assembled here—for it is to all intents and purposes an 'open house'—is a young German geologist. I forget his name, but he is a Prussian by birth, and is sent out by his government to report upon the mineral resources of the tract of land selected for the German colony. I have an idea that he is some relation of Baron Humboldt's, and it appears he enjoys a considerable reputation for scientific skill and attainments. We find him gentlemanlike and well-informed, and indefatigable in his endeavours to further the cause of the particular branch of study

to which he has devoted himself. He has not a tooth in his head, poor man, but that is not his fault, excepting, perhaps, that (inasmuch as I have remarked this peculiarity as a common one among German students) the inordinate use of tobacco may have some effect in depriving them of their organs of mastication. Dr. R—— is never without a cigar in his mouth (which feature is by no means of even moderate dimensions,) but he is far too good-natured to mind a laugh or a joke, and often makes them himself at the expense of his own personal appearance. The use of soap and water is apparently unknown to our scientific acquaintance, and any *change* of raiment is a possession which he appears to consider quite unnecessary. His researches amongst the mud of the Texan rivers, and his diggings after geological specimens in the deep alluvial soil of the country, cause great amusement to us all, and especially to the negroes, who take intense delight in watching his proceedings, and in recording the signal mistakes which he (in common with all men of *science*) is liable sometimes to make.

Our host, like all his countrymen, has an ardent, and inherent love for speculation, and he grew quite excited, when one morning the *savant*, taking *one* from a heap of small shells, which were lying before the door, announced to us that such a specimen would be worth half-a-dollar at Berlin.

I verily believe that the worthy colonel was already making a mental calculation of the expense and expediency of sending off a cargo of the precious conchological specimens to Prussia, when his hitherto blind confidence in the geologist was severely shaken by another assertion which he rashly, and most unfortunately, made. In front of the house are two large slabs of stone, and our geologist, in the fulness of his zeal for science, at once, and most unhesitatingly, pronounced that the said stones *must* have been imported from Bonn, on the Rhine, for that in *no* other part of the world was this exact description of rock to be found. Now, it must be observed, that except in the mountainous regions of Texas, some hundred miles from Galveston Bay, there is no such thing as *stone* of any kind; and most unfortunately for the credit of the *savant*, (who did not appear at all to relish the refutation of his theory,) Colonel M—— had seen with his own eyes the stones in question quarried near the city of Mexico, and had himself transported them to Galveston.

But the doctor, poking in the mud, is nothing to the doctor on horseback! And it is the best fun in the world to see him mounted on a little spirited half-broken mustang, with his stirrups far too short, and his breath coming thick and fast with excitement and fear. He never *quite* calls out for assistance; but at the same time, I am con-

vinced that it is pride alone which prevents his doing so, and his face grows more and more cadaverous, as he splutters forth convulsive and guttural sounds, and prolonged ejaculations of 'Ach, a-c-h gott!' 'O o-h, o-o-h,' till, if I did not feel that even a geological philosopher has no excuse for being afraid, I could find it in my heart to pity his distress.

It is difficult to form an adequate idea of the extent of our host's improvidence, or, I might say, blindness, to his own interests. He has here an estate of several thousand acres of the finest land, and a sufficient number of negroes to cultivate a considerable quantity of it. He has made all sorts of experiments, and can tell exactly how many bushels of Indian corn or pounds of cotton every acre may be made to produce: he has also shown us a small plantation of sugar cane, which is now nearly seven feet in height, and which has rattooned* for five years successively, and contains an unusual quantity of saccharine matter. Yet, with all this, not an acre of land is cultivated, nor are even the common garden vegetables *raised* by the idle hangers-on of the place. There are large herds of cattle and droves of horses on the

* It is generally considered necessary to plant fresh canes after they have rattooned (sprung up) and been cut three years in succession.

estate; but of the number of animals he possesses, I believe Colonel M—— to be in a state of entire ignorance.

Our stay at New Washington (which, by the way, is not a town nor even a village, but merely four or five wooden houses, belonging to the 'lord of the manor') has been diversified by a dinner party! The lady who kindly sent us an invitation is the wife of General S——, who is at present away with the army; and she is the sister of our pretty friend, 'Mrs. Kosciusko.' The scene of festivity was about three miles from the place, and higher up the Bay—and we were all to go—even Tempe being dispatched to the scene of action in the fulfilment of her functions—namely, the superintending of 'Kossy,' the infant hope of the house. The waters being very much *out* in the prairie in consequence of the continued rains, it was agreed that we should all ride on such animals as we might prefer, so, the horses being caught, we set off in high spirits. I had an active Mexican pony allotted to me, while the doctor was mounted on a tall, rawboned beast, with a mouth as hard as its own bit, and a trot high and rough enough to shake even a better rider than the gentle German out of his saddle. He bore his trials, however, better than I had expected, and, happily for him, the prairie, besides being very much under water, was thickly covered with stunted trees, so that we

were obliged to proceed both slowly and cautiously, to avoid the risks of either being knocked off our horses, or of being plunged above their girths in the water through which we splashed.

At about four o'clock (the dinner hour) we arrived at our destination; it is a log-house, like the one we had quitted, but it is constructed with great architectural taste, and covered (porch and all) with creeping-plants, which, in summer weather, must have a charming effect; but in the winter one has certainly a prejudice in favour of glazed windows, carpets, and curtains, and the house is too decidedly a summer residence to be quite enjoyable in the month of January. But, though the house was cold, the welcome was not, and we were charmed with Mrs. S——, who is a most agreeable and intellectual person, full of energy and decision, and just the character to make even a prairie life an endurable, if not a happy one. She is handsome and highly accomplished, and conducts the education of her children with admirable skill; and while with her, I could not help feeling that were such women *as numerous* in America, as they are *perfect*, the censure so often bestowed upon the manners and habits of American ladies might well be spared.

The *dinner party* in this unpeopled prairie, though totally (and partly perhaps because it was so totally) unlike any at which I had ever before

been present, was most enjoyable. The *tout-ensemble* was well calculated to make an impression upon European minds, drilled by the mighty force of fashion and habit into a subserviency to the conventional rules of society, and habituated to its monotony. You must not, however, suppose that there was any want of refinement either in the conversation or the dinner itself; on the contrary, the wines were so excellent, and the 'table talk' so varied and so intelligent, that we could hardly *realize* the fact that we were in a wooden house, with nothing better than a wilderness around its rough and unpretending walls.

It was twelve o'clock before the horses were ordered for our return, the rain was beginning to fall, and the moon (on which we had reckoned to light us home) was taken with one of her sudden fits of caprice, and had hidden her face behind the clouds. Our kind entertainers (the lady had a brother, nearly as intelligent as herself) were urgent in their entreaties that we would spend the night where we were; to this, however, we would by no means consent; so they followed us out into the prairie, and after many injunctions not to lose our way, and a strong hope expressed on all sides of meeting again at some future period, they wished us a cordial 'Good night,' and we proceeded on our way. We had not gone a quarter of a mile from the house, before our difficulties began in

earnest, for it was only by calling aloud to each other that we could keep together, so *pitchy* was the darkness of the night, and landmarks (even if we could have seen them) there were none. There is, at all times, a *despairing* sameness in the aspect of a prairie, but with us, the difficulties of 'plumbing the track' (for road there is none) were increased tenfold by darkness, and the watery state of the country. It was impossible to divest oneself of a bewildering fear that each step might plunge one into a bog, or into the far more appalling dangers of the Bay, which rolled *somewhere* at the depth of a hundred feet beneath us, though of its exact locality the obscurity rendered us entirely ignorant. And so we blundered along—at one moment finding ourselves *fixed* against a young tree, and at another perceiving, by the fitful gleams of the moon, that we were surrounded by the shining waters of the prairie flood. I thought that midnight march would never come to an end, so interminable were our turnings and doublings, and so little the progress that we made; and I was beginning, in consequence, to think rather gloomily of our prospects for the night, when I was aroused by a sound near me, which bore some faint resemblance to a human voice, in supplication and entreaty. It was the Doctor, in the act of *beseeching* his refractory steed to move on; so we listened; and presently, in guttural and most unmusical

phraseology, these plaintive words were heard—'I karn nicht get on mit mine horse at arl—what can I do mit him?—he is so idle, and when I want him to go squick, he will here stay to eat.' At that moment, the moon peeped out between two driving clouds, and there was the poor foreigner, and his obstinate *monture, fixed* as it seemed till *eetarnity*. The animal's Roman nose was buried in the long grass, and the unhappy doctor was pulling hard, but hopelessly at the rein, with both hands, in the vain expectation of persuading the creature to desist from his ill-timed repast. This touching appeal to the compassion of his companions was not made in vain, and by dint of their united efforts the mule-like animal was once more in motion; and we all eventually, but not till it was three o'clock in the morning, and were wet through (with the heavy night-dew) that we reached our temporary home at New Washington. We shall remain here three days longer and then return to Galveston.

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# LETTER XXXIII.

A PRAIRIE VISIT — NEW SETTLERS — CHEERFUL NEGRO HOUSEHOLD—RIFLE SHOOTING—PRETTY SCENERY—THE DOCTOR DESERTS THE PARTY—RETURN TO NEW WASHINGTON — ADVENTURE IN THE PRAIRIE — RETURN TO GALVESTON — CROWDED STATE OF THE HOTEL—VOYAGE TO NEW ORLEANS.

*New Orleans—February.*

THE day following our memorable party in the prairie we agreed to cross the river, on a visit to a still wilder country, and also to the estate and country-house of Mr. A. S——, the ex-diplomatist, and also our fellow-guest. We were to cross the water, a long mile in width, in two remarkably rickety boats, nearly as unsafe in their build as canoes, and rendered particularly so at this precise period from the extent to which they were known to leak. The party consisted—besides our two selves—of Mr. A. S——h, the German doctor, and two negroes, experienced in river navigation, one of whom was to seat himself in each boat and paddle her across.

The instant that Mr. S——h and I, with *our*

black companion, stepped into the boat appropriated to our use, we perceived that it would require our united efforts to be employed in incessant *baling*, if we expected to reach the opposite shore alive. The other boat was, if possible, in a still worse condition, and the doctor (who promised to be a very inefficient auxiliary in case of danger,) was with difficulty persuaded to take his seat, and his *baling* machine, which machine was neither more nor less than a tin saucepan, devoted *pro tempore* to this useful and humane purpose.

It was a mysterious looking morning, for, though the heat of the sun was great, there was a thick river mist which threw a veil over *it* and every other object, and sometimes prevented us from seeing a yard a-head of our boat. From the difficulty which *we* found in keeping our boat even tolerably clear of water, we could judge of the exertions which were being made by our *consort* to effect the same end, and many was the anxious look I cast astern, but all to no purpose, the mist was too thick, and I could make out nothing of the whereabouts of the other boat. The water is in most places of great depth, but every here and there are shallows which extend for many yards, and which at low water it is necessary to avoid. We continued to bale incessantly, but still the water gradually gained upon us, and it was with no little joy that we at last found ourselves stranded (though

neither high nor dry) on a *shallow* within a few yards of the desired shore. It was more than three quarters of an hour before the other boat arrived, and in the meantime we had contrived, not without considerable difficulty, to struggle through the mud and water to *terra firma*. The troubles of the rest of the party had been manifold; they had gone on shore several times, and the doctor had been thrown into such a state of alarm that he either could not or would not exert himself for the general good, and as to joining in the necessary duty of baling out the water, his hands shook greatly too much for any such exertion. The poor creature really looked like a spectre as he scrambled up the bank, and he vowed a vow that no earthly consideration should induce him to return the way he had come, though what was to become of him if abandoned on the side of the river we had reached, was a mystery to all parties.

We had no sooner landed than we perceived a small settler's house not far from where we stood, and to this it was agreed that we should betake ourselves, while our *white* companion and the negroes should walk to Mr. S——h's clearing, and return with mules for our use. We then introduced ourselves to the party in the dog house, which consisted of a mother and daughter, and three neglected looking children, who were playing about the floor. The age of the daughter did not *appear*

to exceed eighteen, but she must have been older, being, as I soon discovered, the mother of the three young settlers in the corner. The whole domestic establishment were fresh importations from one of the northern cities of the Union, where they had enjoyed balls, and theatres, and the pleasures of fine clothing, and here they were, apparently greatly to their own surprise, transported with their city habits, their summer clothing, and their thin shoes, (for I never yet have seen an American *female*, in any weather, in thick ones,) into the heart of the Texan prairies! I never saw two people look more thoroughly miserable, or more hopelessly discontented; and the way in which they described their landing at New Washington in the keen wind of a winter's night, and the misery they had endured from having to wait there in the open air till morning without either food or warm clothing, plainly showed how deeply they considered themselves aggrieved, and convinced me that the husbands of the two dissatisfied women had been obliged to undergo not a *few* reproaches from their companions in misfortune.

All these calamities were dwelt upon, as they sat shivering in the verandah, drawing round them their light summer shawls, and bitterly lamenting the hour when they first heard the name of *Texas*. We spent more than an hour with them—not willingly, I confess—for they were not good specimens

of Yankee character, and, moreover, we had exhausted all our topics of conversation, and began greatly to long for the reappearance of our companions. At this juncture I unfortunately caught sight of two men, whose heads were peeping over a new fence some distance off, and whose employment and dress were those of field labourers; their costume was so different from that of the *females*, that there was perhaps *some* excuse, though not much, for the awkward and blundering remark which I was drawn into making regarding them; for, stimulated by a complete dearth of any subject for conversation, and wearied to death of our situation, I, in an unguarded moment, complimented the elder lady on her good fortune in having been able to procure *white labour*, suggesting at the same time, how very superior the work done by white men is, to any which the negroes are in the habit of 'getting through.' The look she gave me was one which it was intended should convey volumes of independent pride and Yankee scorn of 'strangers.' 'Those *gentlemen* happen to be my sons and my brothers,' was the indignant reply of the republican matron, greatly to my distress and discomfiture, for, as you may imagine, I had no more intention of hurting her feelings or her self-love, than I had of walking back across the river to New Washington. I did my best to recover my lost ground, and to do away the impression which

she evidently entertained, that I had wantonly and designedly insulted her in the persons of the male branches of her family; but it was in vain that I remarked upon the praiseworthy conduct of those who by honest industry gain a comfortable livelihood for themselves and their families. I even went so far as to disparage the gentlemanly vagabondism which prevails in our country, and to extol the working habits of *hers* in contradistinction to it; but all would not do, and I felt that the 'English woman' was being mentally accused of the worst description of pride and *overbearingness*.

From under the cloud of ill-feeling which we felt was gathering around us, we were, as you may imagine, most happy to escape, and I cannot describe to you the feelings of satisfaction with which I at length mounted my mule and rode away, feeling, however, that the 'set-up *female*' from the old country was being subject to very severe remarks from the party in the shanty. Our party were all mounted on very lazy mules, and all being armed with rifles, we were (to all intents and purposes) going (as it is called in this country) 'a hunting.' We saw a good many deer, both singly and in herds, and several prairie birds; the scenery, too, was very varied and pretty. The heat of the sun in the middle of the day was intense, and we were glad to linger under the shade of the far-spreading ilexes, and spend the chief part of the

day in the woods. It was late in the afternoon when we reached Mr. S——h's habitation, a neat bachelor's establishment, far enough from either the pleasures or the *tracasseries* of social life. A good many small wooden tenements for 'my black servants,' as the slaves are generally called by their owners, were dotted about, and there were some young *stock* frolicking about, in the shape both of negro children and horses; there was poultry in great plenty and variety, and the farm and farm-building looked well kept and thriving. As for the house itself, there is no denying that it *was* small, neither am I at all prepared to say that it contained more than one room of very limited extent. I *heard* a dark hint given about another apartment, but if it *were* a real, and not an imaginary, chamber, I must be allowed to wonder why the ostensible room was made to do duty for 'bed-room and parlour, and *h*-all,' for such was, in fact, the state of the case.

No one was, apparently, more heartily amused at the entertaining deficiency of plates and places than our host himself. With too much good taste to oppress us with apologies for the absence of luxuries, which, in that wild scene, would have been quite misplaced, he allowed us to enjoy ourselves in our own way, and we were, in consequence, quite happy. The doctor was as hungry as a hound, and devoured boiled fowls and fried eggs enough for a dozen men, at least; and though the wood fire

did smoke, so that we were forced to sit with the door open, and though *one* took his plate upon the bed, and another was obliged to content himself with a wooden box, I never recollect passing a more agreeable day. Our host, enlivened by some excellent French brandy, shone particularly in anecdote and repartee, and when the shades of evening began to close around the prairie home, it was with real regret that we made our preparations for returning.

I never saw more happy, laughing faces than those of the negroes on that *location*. They were ready to give their opinion on all subjects without a shadow of fear, and in their joy at seeing their master's face again, exerted themselves to the utmost for the comfort of his guests. One of them —a stout, jet black young negro—was an admirable rifle shot, and carried away the palm from the gentlemen who, one and all, tried their skill while the dinner was in preparation.

We mounted our horses when the evening was far advanced, and in company with our hospitable entertainer prepared to ride once more towards the Bay; but nothing could move the doctor; he had been far too much frightened when it was broad daylight to be willing again to risk his precious person in those horrid boats. Seeing that his fears placed him beyond the reach of persuasion, the *ex-chargé* had nothing to do but

to express a courteous hope that he would make himself quite at home where he was, and then we wished him 'farewell.' The last glimpse I caught of the scientific German, was the dim outline of a man seated on the wooden bench before the door of the shanty, with his hammer and bag of specimens in his hand, and a considerable quantity of *Cognac* in his head. What became of him after that we never heard.

Our voyage home was performed in safety, though with much discomfort, and on our return we found that a *bear hunt* had been arranged for the following day; the weather, however, proved so unpropitious that, as the Houston steamer was expected down, we agreed to return to Galveston without any further delay. We could not part from our new friends without much regret, and there was so much genuine kindness and real simplicity in all their feelings and actions, that we felt as if we had known them for years instead of days, and regretted to think how little chance there seemed to be of our ever meeting again, either in the wild prairie or in the busy hum of crowded cities.

It is almost impossible to say too much in praise of the spirit of hospitality which is found in these new countries: every house on the wide-spreading and dreary prairie is open to the traveller, and no one is ever turned from the door of a dweller in the wilderness without a shelter and a meal. It is

true that far up the country there are said to be persons who have been suspected of playing most unfair and cruel tricks upon unweary travellers; and one gigantic backwoodsman in particular, Shadowan by name, who inhabits a sort of lonely inn in the Washington direction, is suspected of having (in concert with his wife, a lady of equally formidable dimensions) brought not a few wandering settlers to an untimely end. His house is, in consequence of these reports, looked upon with a good deal of suspicion, and there are not many 'single gentlemen' found bold enough to take up their quarters in it, even for a single night. This bad character, however, may not be entirely deserved, for there is no doubt that great injustice is often done to these *wild men of the woods.*

There is certainly enough in their appearance to justify the worst conclusions; and one cannot fancy anything but strife and bloodshed as connected with all the pistols and bowie-knives with which they are generally covered. Still, notwithstanding their repellent looks, I have been assured that very many of these gentlemen of the border are meek and gentle as lambs, and only *get themselves up* in so fierce a guise because it is the prevailing fashion of their SET. Our friend, Mr. R., who has seen a great deal of frontier life, informs us that he has generally found that those who looked the greatest desperadoes were, in reality, the meekest

men in nature, and that he considered it very unfair to judge of a man in the backwoods by either his appearance or reputation.

In support of this opinion, he gave us an amusing account of an adventure which happened to himself at the abode of the very Shadowan whom I have mentioned above, and who must have been as ruffianly a looking fellow as could well be seen. Mr. R. was journeying along the pathless prairie in a *sulky*, a vehicle most appropriately named, as by no possible contrivance can it be made to carry more than one person, and that sufficiently uncomfortably to account for the traveller's becoming rapidly in a frame of mind suitable to the epithet bestowed on his conveyance. Our friend had passed a solitary day, no human form had he seen, and the only variety through the long and weary hours was, when passing among the clumps of trees that are occasionally seen in the prairie country, he caught a glimpse of an opossum on an overhanging branch, or of a graceful mocking-bird balancing itself aloft, and carolling forth its pleasant noonday song. And so he 'got along,' bound upon business, and leaving it quite a matter of uncertainty where he should spend the night. It was growing dusk, the air was cold, and our Yankee friend began to think it was time to look out a-head in search of a place where he could procure a night's lodging for him-

self and his exhausted steed. He was well aware that the vague and indistinct track which (in prairie language) he had been *plumbing*, led somewhere in the direction of the hostelry of the dreaded and far-famed Shadowan. There was no other house for many a mile, so the traveller being forced to put up with what he could find, steered straight for some smoke which he saw rising at a short distance, and which he rightly enough conjectured to be the spot he was in search of; but it was not without some trepidation that he thought how probable it was that he should have to lay his bones there, and that long before the morning light his sulky, and all that it contained, would become a prey to the rapacious Shadowan and his unfeminine lady.

At length, the inn (a small log-house) appeared in sight; Mr. R. urged on his horse, and soon found himself at the door of the inhospitable looking abode. A gaunt and very unprepossesing looking female having appeared to answer his summons, the new-comer requested to know if he could be accommodated with board and lodging for the night; the woman, who was no other than the redoubted Mrs. Shadowan herself, hesitated very much, but at last said, she really didn't think she could, for that Mr. Shadowan was out hunting, and that he wasn't over fond of having strangers loafing about when he wasn't at home himself—in

short, the good lady ended by distinctly saying that she strongly recommended the weary man to go about his business.

Now, the doing so, by no means suited the views of the Yankee. He was fatigued, and his horse was fairly *used up*, so he mustered up all his eloquence, and what with that, and no little expenditure of *soft sawder*, he fairly got the better of the lady's scruples, and gained a footing within the house. His hostess, after throwing another log or two on the fire, took down a rifle, and left the house, in order, as she said, to get him some supper; and a short time only had elapsed before a shot was heard, and Mrs. Shadowan appeared, bearing on her back a fine buck, which she had just killed,* and a part of which was immediately prepared for the hungry Yankee.

The hours passed on; it was a dark night, and yet no Shadowan had made his appearance. Mr. R—— soon began to feel *like sleeping*, he had devoured a good many *fixings* in the shape of venison, eggs, and corn-bread, and, fatigued with his gastronomic exertions, he requested his hostess to show him the place where he was to pass the

* The most successful mode of shooting deer in the prairies is practised at night, a torch being used to attract the animals, who will then fearlessly approach the light to gratify their curiosity. The sportsman generally fires as soon as he can see the creature's eyes.

night. He was, accordingly, conducted to a little inner room, or rather closet, where he found a low sort of pallet bed, on which he was informed that he was to stretch his weary limbs. The bed was not an inviting one in appearance; in fact, no one but a tired Yankee would have ventured to trust his person on such a miserable and unseemly couch. The traveller, however, was not inclined (at that moment) to be fastidious; so, having placed his bowie knife by his side, and a loaded pistol near his right hand, he soon sunk into a profound slumber. How long he had slept he knew not, when he was awakened by a stir in the adjoining apartment; it was not much of a noise after all, but men who have gone to sleep with a consciousness of personal danger, slumber lightly, and the Yankee's ears were on the full cock in a moment.

His eyes were fixed on the door, but he feigned slumber to watch with greater security the movements of a man, whom he perceived through the half-opened door, and whom he sensibly enough concluded to be no less a person than Shadowan himself. He had not long to watch, for soon the door opened, widely though softly, and betrayed to his agitated glance the figure of a man of unusual height and breadth, who, with a large knife in his hand, was moving stealthily to the bed on which lay the Yankee traveller. His situation was an awful one, and, almost giving himself up for lost, he

gently cocked his pistol. The thought flashed across his mind that he might fire, and possibly kill his man, but then came the recollection that (his weapon being unloaded) he would have to encounter, almost unarmed, a no less redoubtable foe in the shape of Mrs. Shadowan. These thoughts passed rapidly through the mind of the agitated Yankee, as with his hand firmly grasping his pistol, he saw the giant Shadowan advancing on tip-toe to his bed-side. He neared the bed, the bare knife in his hand, whilst his victim lay nearly paralysed by fear and the variety of emotions which he was enduring. One more—a last step, was taken, and Shadowan was at the bed-side! Mr. R—— had his pistol ready, and his finger was even laid on the trigger, when Shadowan stretched over the bed, and raised the long blade of a knife above his head!

Now was the critical moment! The eyes of the desperated Yankee, who was on the very point of firing his weapon, were turned full upon his blood-thirsty host, when he fortunately perceived that above his head hung a side of bacon, and that it was with the intention of cutting a rasher for his own supper, and *not* with any murderous design that the hungry Shadowan had intruded on his slumbers. True to his human *natur*, the first sensations of the traveller were those of joy at his own safety, but his second were those of unfeigned

satisfaction that he had not been led by his ridiculous suspicions (however justified under the circumstances) to sacrifice the life of a fellow-creature. The remainder of the night was spent in quiet and in sleep, and on the following morning the only circumstance which could be supposed to have any reference to the adventure, was a remark of Shadowan's, that he was afraid his guest had been alarmed at something in the night, for that he fancied he had heard the *click* of a pistol. Whether this little *click* saved our friend's life can never be known, but certain it is, that Messrs. Shadowan and R—— shook hands and parted the best friends in the world. How many midnight murders have been committed by this worthy *gentleman*, remains a mystery, but there he still remains, to entrap unwary travellers, and afford the settlers a subject for many a harrowing tale of treachery and spoliation.

The steamers are in the habit of making such a momentary stay at the New Washington landing, that we were obliged to hold ourselves in readiness to go on board, by taking up our position by the water's side for a considerable time before the vessel was telegraphed as being in sight. Happily for us, the steamer was heard *snorting* towards us before we had had time to grow *very* weary of our somewhat cold and comfortless situation, and in a

very short space of time we were all on board, and steaming rapidly down towards Galveston.

When we returned to the Tremont, we were greeted with the melancholy intelligence that, from the great influx of guests, our comfortable little sitting room could no longer be called our own, so that for the short remainder of our stay we were obliged to content ourselves with the 'ladies' parlour,' by way of drawing-room. There was only one thing to make us much regret our change of quarters, and that was, that in the component parts of the society, the juvenile branches were in far too great a majority. An American child is not generally a favourable specimen of that period of life, and a Yankee boy of ten or twelve years of age, is one of the least pleasant creatures in existence. When scarcely past the age of infancy, one of these young republicans will, if he be not prevented, (and they are very tenacious of their rights as free citizens,) puff his cigar in your face, without the slightest regard to the decencies of life. The wealth of many of the locomotive Americans, who halt at Galveston on their way up the country, seems frequently to consist in the number of their offspring. Babies are a staple commodity, and their cries frequently rendered our nights sleepless and our days wearisome. There was one large family who had spent a noisy night close to us, and whose parents, to my dismay, forgot 'the baby,' on their de-

parture. I have no doubt it was a *girl*, and a sickly one to boot, or their memories would have served them better.

The ladies were all busily engaged during the day in needlework of some kind or other, but I was surprised to find that the now universal art of crochet work was unknown at Galveston. They fell in love with the accomplishment directly it was explained to them, and were all eager to begin a purse immediately. Unfortunately, the means did not keep pace with the intention, for Galveston could not boast of a single skein of the requisite silk, nor could the *blacksmith* whom they summoned to their assistance, contrive to make even the humblest imitation of a delicate crochet needle. I left them still struggling with their difficulties when I commenced our preparations for departure.

We did not return to New Orleans in the same steamer which brought us to Galveston, greatly preferring the 'Alabama,' a vessel lately taken off the Havannah station, where she had been running for some years. The influx of emigrants into Texas was at this time so great, that it had become quite a profitable speculation to charter vessels for their conveyance, and thus it was that the 'Alabama,' a good and safe boat, with an excellent captain, found herself running between New Orleans and Galveston, to the comfort and convenience of many who, like ourselves, neither considered the steamers

already on the station *quite* sea-worthy, nor the conduct of those on board altogether blameless.

We had made several pleasant acquaintances at Galveston, with whom we were sorry to part, and *I* had also to regret a delightful young *English* horse, nearly thorough bred, which had been hired for me during our stay, and which I could not of course take away with me. We left Galveston with the conviction that *then* at least she was 'going a-head' fast, and we felt happy in her prospects. The weather was calm and delightful, and we had a charming passage back to 'the city.' We approached the gay scene after an absence of a few weeks, with real satisfaction, for it certainly looked infinitely more cheerful than the lonely island we had left, and as I passed the convent of the *Sacré Cœur*, I could not help thinking how much less the fair nuns who inhabited that lightsome building were to be pitied than those who vegetate in a similar establishment at Galveston. Since our former visit to that place, the largest house in the island has been converted into a convent for the sisters of the *Sacré Cœur*, and I always thought it the most gloomy looking refuge for single ladies that I ever saw. We have now been returned two days, so I shall bid you farewell for the present.

## LETTER XXXIV.

FEMALE QUAKER'S ORATION—TEMPLETON'S CONCERT —LOUIS PHILIPPE'S HOUSE—SLAVE QUARTER—DEPARTURE FOR A SUGAR PLANTATION—COUNTRY HOUSE ON THE MISSISSIPPI—DESCRIPTION OF SUGAR-MAKING—THE CONDITION OF THE NEGROES—DEPLORABLE ABSENCE OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION—RETURN TO THE CITY—CARNIVAL AT NEW ORLEANS.

*New Orleans—February.*

WE found on our return to this place, that amusement and gaiety of all kinds and descriptions were going on. There were nightly balls, plays, and concerts without end; but besides these popular recreations, there was the (to us) far newer exhibition of a Quaker-lady giving lectures on temperance in the St. Louis ball-room. She was a middle-aged woman, very prosy, and to the regret of at least one portion of her audience, endued with a strength of lungs almost preternatural. Her lectures lasted for more than two hours, during which she exhorted her hearers to abstain, not only from fermented liquors, but from all exciting amusements. She never hesitated in

her discourse, which was entirely extemporary, nor did the well-plaited frills of her Quaker-cap vibrate with a single nervous emotion from the beginning to the end. Her lectures were evidently very popular at first, but after the novelty of seeing a woman address a large public assembly was once over, I confess that, for my own part, I soon grew tired of the monotony of her subjects and manner.

Templeton, the English singer, is also here, giving concerts, which are remarkably well attended: we went with a party of friends to hear him, and found the Assembly Room, though it is very large, disagreeably crowded. After performing some of his favourite songs, prefacing each with, what might be termed, a short *musical* lecture, there was an unanimous request preferred by the Americans for the 'Star-spangled Banner,' the fine and inspiring national anthem of the United States, which was beautifully sung, and produced great effect, being twice and most enthusiastically encored. The concluding words of the stanza,

'Tis the Star-Spangled Banner, oh! long may it wave,
O'er the land of the *Free*, and the home of the Brave,

made me think of the thousands of *slaves* outside, and *as* I thought, I rather shrank from the patriotic and enthusiastic demonstrations which were called forth.

After the excitement caused by the performance

of the popular air had subsided, a wish was expressed by some of the English and Scotch who were present, that the amusements of the evening should be terminated by the singing of 'God save the Queen.' After the satisfaction which they had shown, and the applause which they had lavished on the American air, her Majesty's subjects were certainly justified in thinking that the compliment should be returned, and that their countryman would be allowed to agree in their request; but, to my regret and surprise, (for I should have imagined that the Americans would have been both more liberal and more courteous,) they put a decided veto on the proposition. The discussion that ensued was beginning to grow rather stormy, when the 'Britishers' thought it more prudent to withdraw their motion, and to relinquish the anticipated pleasure of hearing their old national anthem performed in the United States.

I doubt whether, under ordinary circumstances, the Americans would have raised these objections, but the English government and country is just now decidedly unpopular, and the state of uncertainty in regard to the Oregon Question keeps the minds both of men and women in a state of ferment and irritation. I confess that there are moments in which I almost long for a declaration of war between the two countries, not from any vindictive or even *martial* feelings, but because I am tired of hearing

the majority of the people boast so much of what they would and could do, in case of a struggle for Oregon actually taking place. All their boastings, however, are in themselves so exceedingly ridiculous, that *they*, as well as the terms in which they are couched, are becoming a standing joke, even with their own people, and, as far as we are concerned, generally excite more laughter than displeasure.

It was not without feelings of great interest that we visited the house once occupied by Louis Philippe, in the early part of his eventful life. It is a detached house, by no means large, and is situated in that quarter of the city still inhabited by the remains of the French *noblesse:* it is surrounded by a verandah, and is pointed out with great respect to strangers, as the abode of the son of 'Egalité.'

In the same part of the town, and not far from this interesting spot, is the Slave Bazaar, as it may be called, for there the negroes, men and women, all dressed in their best, are generally to be seen, waiting for customers. On the appearance of any one likely to become a purchaser, they are marched out, and their merits enlarged upon by their respective owners. They looked cheerful enough, for Providence has happily endowed them with light hearts, as a counterbalance to the evils of their condition. But what condition has not its

evils? And who can say, that the All-Wise Dispenser of good and evil has not apportioned to each of us a more equal division of *both*, than at a cursory view would sometimes appear.

The cotton presses at New Orleans are very extensive buildings; we visited one, the front of which extended for nearly two hundred and fifty yards, and it is capable of storing 25,000 bales of cotton. The process of pressing is performed by steam and, with wonderful rapidity, each bale being compressed into half its original bulk. Our friends and acquaintances grow rapidly in number, and invitations come thick and fast. Numerous are those we have received to spend *any time* on the plantations of some of our kind friends after the New Orleans season, when they return to the country; and we should gladly accept some of them could our stay in the south be prolonged.

I believe that people in England have very little idea of the riches and hospitality of some of the southern planters: we are acquainted with some, who, I am told, have as many as two thousand vassals in the shape of negroes, and their enormous fortunes are spent, not only in dissipation and hospitality, but also in ameliorating the condition of those who are thus dependent upon them. We have heard so many different accounts in England of the treatment of the slaves on the plantations, that we have determined to judge for ourselves

how far *any* of them are true, and have, therefore, planned two expeditions—one up the river, and the other to that part of the Attakapas bordering on the Gulf of Mexico, where are to be found some of the sugar plantations originally established, and still possessed by Spaniards. The gentleman whose sugar plantations on the Mississippi we have engaged to visit, resides about *eighty* miles up the river, and possesses about two hundred and fifty slaves. After a prosperous *voyage*, we were received, on our landing from the steamer, with great kindness by Mr. and Mrs. M., who were awaiting our arrival. The house stands in a grove of orange trees, which had in their season been loaded with fruit, for we saw the golden balls lying in heaps upon the ground as we walked up the avenue leading from the river's bank to the dwelling-house.

We were very glad to find that we had arrived at the most opportune moment for witnessing the manufacture of the sugar, half the crop being already got in, and the whole process of grinding and boiling being in full activity. The former process is effected by steam, and the juice which is thus expressed runs into different circular boilers, generally about six or eight feet in diameter, and three in depth, underneath which are fires; as the sugar boils, the scum which rises to the surface is skimmed off. The contents are then emptied

into another boiler, where, after having undergone nearly a similar process, they are allowed to cool. The greatest nicety seems to be required in the boiling process, and in this appears to consist the great art of manufacturing sugar, the object being to effect the boiling in such a manner as to procure from the juice, when cool, the greatest degree of granulation. The juice which remains in the bottoms of the pans, after the sugar on the surface has been removed, is called molasses, and the sugar is valued according to its whiteness, and the peculiar manner in which it is crystalized.

I am told that a boiling process has lately been discovered by which the quality of the sugar is very much improved, as it has the effect of rendering it nearly white, and thus increasing its value by nearly one-half. This method is called boiling *in vacuo*, and consists in having the boilers made with a double case, so that the juice never comes in contact with that part of the iron which is immediately exposed to the flame. By this method the sugar escapes being burnt, and, consequently, has no longer the brown hue which, when boiled by the old process, it always more or less assumes.

We spent a considerable time in the sugar-house, which is a large brick building, with a tall chimney at one end. The negroes seemed to be as cheerful and merry a set of people as I ever saw, although for the last four or five days they had been very

severely worked. The labour required from them during the week or ten days when the crop is being cut and the sugar made, is most arduous; night and day the fires are kept up, and the grinding and boiling is continued. There are generally two or three sets of boilers, in order that the process may be carried on without intermission; this degree of expedition is absolutely necessary, because the juice, after rising in the cane to a certain point, very soon begins again to descend, and after this is the case, not only is the quantity of juice much less, but its saccharine properties also diminish. Our feet, while in the boiling house, were actually sticking to the floor, which was soaked with molasses and half made sugar, and the smell of the melting sugar, even at three hundred yards distance from it, is very oppressive. The niggers were very talkative, and seemed to look forward with intense delight to the harvest home festivities, which take place when the crop has been all gathered and the sugar making completed. This event is celebrated in every plantation by a perfect jubilee of rejoicing, and it frequently lasts three or four days, during which time the negroes dance and sing, and drink incessantly, never pausing in their merriment for an hour, but carrying it on from morning till night, and from night till morning. The black race are very fond of dancing, and also of all kinds of music; they have, generally

speaking, sweet and musical voices, and I think that some of the most harmonious sounds I ever heard have proceeded from the lips of young negro girls. Idleness and love of liquor are the prevailing vices of the negroes; could they be cured of these, much might be done with them, but this is extremely difficult, and, under the circumstances, perhaps impossible.

The field immediately behind the house contains the granary, storehouses, and workshops; nor must the hospital for sick negroes be forgotten—its interior arrangements are excellent, and it is as clean and comfortable an infirmary as one could wish to see. The blacks themselves are domiciled in a little *hamlet* of wooden houses, situated about half a mile from the abode of the proprietor; they appeared to be very comfortable, and such of the *gals* as we found at home were singing and laughing amongst themselves, while young children were playing about on the grass, as happy as their youth and their freedom from care could make them. There was something irresistibly comic in the movements and the grimaces of these little black urchins, as they tumbled about on the grass, and rolled their great *white* eyes from under their woolly brows. The owners seem often really fond of these odd little animals, independently of their selfish interest in them, as the representatives of so many dollars; and it is very gratifying to find that the

children are never separated from their parents in infancy, *public feeling* as well as *law* being against so cruel and unnatural a proceeding. When black babies are sold *with* their parents, the former are valued according to their weight, and the sum generally demanded for them is, I believe, about five dollars a pound. I think I hear *you* exclaim, as I did when I heard this, 'How very, very shocking!' but having told you the worst, I wish you could also have had an opportunity of seeing, as I have seen, the way in which the little creatures are petted, and how perfectly happy they seem; you would then, I think, be inclined to join in my feelings of self-reproach at not being able to commiserate their fate as deeply as I had intended to do. A great many of the negro infants die very soon after birth, and this has been attributed to various causes; I believe, however, that it is to the want of common care on the part of the mothers, that these early deaths are to be attributed.

We have visited several of the plantations in the neighbourhood, for a general inspection of their establishments is always permitted, and often invited by the proprietors. Their method of making sugar, their system of cultivation, and their negro quarters, are all freely shewn to any respectable stranger who may request to see them. The result of this conduct is, that no plantation transactions are or can be hidden from the public, and that in

the large cities, one not unfrequently hears such questions as the following:—'Were you at Mr. A——'s plantation?'—'How were his negroes looking?'—and, 'How were his *quarters?*' If a good account of Mr. A——'s belongings and proceedings be given, then he is proportionately well thought of, and looked up to; but if Mr. A——'s negroes should be described as lean, sickly, and badly clothed, and their houses as in a dirty and dilapidated state, then the improvident Mr. A—— is considered at once as of 'no 'count,' his credit is at least shaken, and the idea becomes prevalent throughout the city that he is in embarrassed circumstances, and must immediately sell his sugars, however low the price which ('money being *tight*') he may be able to obtain for them.

I am now satisfied that, on the Mississippi at least, the slaves are almost invariably treated with kindness, and that severity is very rarely practised towards them; when the contrary is the case, it is the *exception* to the general rule, and is almost invariably the fault of the overseers, and only occurs in the absence of the proprietors. It will surprise no one possessed of the slightest knowledge of *human nature*, to hear that the blacks themselves are by far the most cruel and exacting slave-masters. At a very short distance from Mr. M——'s, and on the other side of the river, is a large plantation owned by a black man, who was formerly

himself a slave, and who now treats one hundred of his kind with a tyranny and want of feeling which is proverbial in the neighbourhood.

On Saturdays and Sundays the negroes are allowed to work for themselves in their own gardens, or to lie all day long idly on the grass, if too indolent to exert themselves; some have pursued the more industrious course, the consequence of which is that they have always poultry and eggs in abundance, and not unfrequently *pigs* to sell. Their produce is generally bought by their masters, who are certain to pay them twice as much as it is worth, and a great deal more than they would obtain from the passing steamers and flats, the owners of which sometimes become their customers. I have heard the most exorbitant demands made by these black gentlemen for the above articles, and on being reproached by their masters for their extortion, no apology more satisfactory than a broad grin was offered by the delinquent. The slaves often contrive to amass very considerable sums of money, and in such cases it frequently happens that they have (as an Irishman might say) twice as much as they are worth, their precious persons being valued only at five hundred dollars, while in their pockets is stowed away perhaps double that sum. Several planters were pointed out to me who had been largely indebted to their slaves for pecuniary loans; but with all this, it

very rarely happens that the slave lays by money for the purchase of his freedom, though he might easily do so, were he sufficiently anxious for the boon.

You may, perhaps, think, that by saying so much in favour of these slave-owners, I am to a certain extent glossing over the evils of slavery, and conveying an erroneous idea of the condition of the black people. This, I must assure you, is far from my intention; I speak from actual observation of the good *general* treatment of the slaves, and in doing so you must bear in mind that my remarks apply more particularly to the State of Louisiana than to that of the slave States in general, about which I am not qualified as an eye-witness to speak. The impression upon my mind (and I have, I confess, a great horror of the state of slavery, *per se*) is that their bondage is not so irksome, or their situation half so unhappy as it is represented to be. The paucity of religious instruction, the want of a minister of the gospel, and the entire absence of religious observances, sacraments, and offices, are, in my opinion, the most crying evils in the slavery system. The children on the plantations are not christened; marriage is a mere civil contract; and when a negro dies, he is generally buried like a dog in a hole, in unconsecrated ground.

The slaves have naturally a strong wish for re-

ligious instruction, and they are also extremely inclined to the indulgence of superstitious feelings and fears; they are also very apt to select a preacher from among themselves, who discourses to them on Sundays, and even on week days after their work is over, and who is always listened to with great attention. The negro preacher is not, however, much encouraged by the planters generally, which is I think to be regretted, as in the absence of any orthodox religious instruction, it seems hard that they should not be allowed to supply his place to the best of their ability. It is said, as an excuse for this rather despotic proceeding on the part of the slave-owners, that a bad use has too often been made of the privilege when granted, the object of the preacher being rather that of exciting his hearers to discontent than of preaching to them the word of God.

*Cunning* seems to be a quality possessed in a great degree by most of the negro race, and we were particularly struck by the artful manner in which we saw some of the slaves belonging to a neighbouring plantation prefer their requests to their master. They were sharp enough to see that the presence of strangers might induce their owner to agree to demands which it was very possible would, under other circumstances, be refused. So it was—'Massa promise build me new house'—'Massa promise, last fall, make my pigstie:' in

short, the poor man was harassed by fresh demands at every turn, while we were *as* greatly amused by the artful plottings of these cunning people.

We had some delightful rides in the woods, watching the opossums and listening to the mocking-birds. The ilexes were of great size and beauty, and the hanging moss and the profusion of creeping plants added much to the beauty of the woods. After a very pleasant visit of a week's duration, we returned to the city in time to witness the procession of the fat ox on *Mardi Gras*, and to be violently pelted with *bonbons*, both real and counterfeit. The carnival gaieties so closely resemble those of Catholic countries in Europe, that I will refrain from giving you a description of them. There were the crowds of open carriages filled with masks, some in fancy dresses and some without, and the same (often most tiresome) licence of word and deed. I have no time to write you more of our adventures at present, so shall close my letter.

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## LETTER XXXV.

ATROCITIES COMMITTED IN THE DISTANT PLANTATIONS—DEPARTURE FOR THE MEXICAN ARCHIPELAGO—THE 'DIME' STEAMBOAT—DIFFICULTIES OF THE NAVIGATION—THE ISLAND OF BARATARIA—DON RUBIERA—LIFE IN THE ISLAND—THE MURDERED OVERSEER—SELINA—LEAVE BARATARIA FOR ANOTHER PLANTATION.

*New Orleans—February.*

OUR trip up the river had been so interesting, and we had seen the condition of slavery in so mild a form, that we could not help fancying that there *must* be a darker side of the picture than that we had seen. There can be no doubt of the fact, that in these days the *horrors* of slavery cannot exist, nor can acts of cruelty and gross injustice be practised on the black race on the banks of that great thoroughfare, the Mississippi River, or indeed any part of the country, where a man's actions must inevitably become known to his fellow-men; but, on the plantations which are more removed from public observation, all sorts of atrocities *may* still be perpetrated to the disgrace of humanity, without any risk of loss of character

to the tyrant who is capable of taking so cruel an advantage of the unprotected condition of his negroes. Such *may* certainly be the case, but we were informed by the best authorities here, and among them by some of the bitterest foes to slavery, that, in some of the distant plantations, the slaves lead frequently an easier life than they do on the Mississippi; we were also informed that though instances of cruelty are rare, the immorality which prevails is almost incredible.

We were sorry to find that we could not visit that part of the Attakapas which we were most anxious to see, owing to the absence from their plantations of those we had, at one time, intended to visit. The Attakapas is a sugar region, which commences some thirty or forty miles west of the Mississippi, and extends towards the Gulf of Mexico: it is watered by the Atchafalaya, the Teche, La Fourche, and other small streams; and it was here that Louis Philippe found a home for many months, during the troubles of the French Revolution. A gentleman, who is the owner of two or three of the model plantations in the State of Louisiana, kindly offered to be our Cicerone, in our trip to the lower part of the river, and also to show us some plantations on the Gulf shore, which are the most remote from human ken, and which are, in fact, almost inaccessible except by sea. He assured me, that these plantations, though they

are not more than seventy or eighty miles from New Orleans, have rarely, if ever, been visited by a European *female*, to quote a very disagreeable Americanism; but we were not to be deterred from the undertaking by the objections, or evil prognostications of our friends, but commenced the preparations for our pilgrimage in a most business-like manner. Our kind friend, Mr. B——, not only kindly undertook to procure the means of conveyance, but also to make every arrangement for our comfort during the expedition. He possessed a sugar plantation on one of the islands of the Mexican Archipelago to which we were bound, and we could not sufficiently congratulate ourselves on our good fortune, in having the advantage of his escort and experience.

As the greater part of our journey was to be performed on the canals and lake, lying to the south-west of the Mississippi, Mr. B—— informed us, that he had chartered a boat for the expedition. The vessel in question was called the 'Dîme,' which word being the name of a very minute coin in circulation in America, will sufficiently attest that our boat was not remarkable for size. She was, in fact, neither more nor less than a small barge, of about the same dimensions as the smallest of those used on our English canals; our canopy over head was formed of wooden planks; and if 'a strange invisible perfume hit the sense,'

it proceeded from the grease, hot iron, and vapour of a little steam-engine, which was contained in a small enclosed space in the after-part of our flat boat; the sides, excepting at the stern, were entirely open.

We were to spend the first night, if we were so fortunate as to reach the desired spot before nightfall, on the *island* of a sugar planter, whose domain lay directly in our way. As we had the prospect of a long day's voyage before us, we laid in a good store of provisions, so as to be prepared for any accidental delay. The first stage of our journey was performed by railroad, a distance of ten miles, which brought us to a part of the Mississippi where the 'Dime' was lying. A *lock* was opened for our admission, and when its ponderous gates closed upon our boat, we were soon let down to the level of the canal on which we were to proceed. It was a rainy morning, which was unfortunate, as the shelter afforded in the boat was extremely scanty; however, the weather cleared up about noon, and our spirits began to revive under the cheering influence of the sun's rays.

The scene became more novel and curious, the farther we progressed; imagine an infinite number of confused cross *water* roads, a species of natural canals, which grew more and more intricate in their turnings and windings as we slowly wended our way through them. Sometimes these aquatic paths

were wide and sometimes narrow, and on either side were flat, reedy, and most unwholesome-looking banks, raised but a few inches above the level of the water, while occasionally, but at rare intervals, the tall trees quite overshadowed our way. How the engineer and the steersman, who formed our crew, contrived to find their way through the puzzling sameness of this intricate navigation, was a mystery to the rest of the party on board: *they*, however, never seemed at a loss, but without any apparent land or water mark to direct them, they steadily pursued their course, the water sometimes widening into broad lakes, and at others becoming contracted into so narrow a channel, that our boat brushed the long flag-like rushes on either side in her passage through.

The sun came brightly out about twelve o'clock, and with it the *alligators*, for we soon discovered one of those hideous creatures reposing among the reeds a few yards a-head of our vessel. It was the first I had seen on land, and I was in hopes that he would permit us to make a closer investigation of him, but I was disappointed—the huge reptile must have been only feigning sleep, for he was floundering in the water before we were alongside of him. When evening came, we had emerged from the *narrows*, and were in what appeared to us, in the gathering gloom, a wide and extensive lake. For a moment, our crew appeared puzzled

how to proceed, but soon the distant barking of watch dogs was heard, and we steered in the direction of the welcome sounds. We had not very far to go, and, by the time we reached the shore, the noise of what appeared to us an entire pack of hounds drowned every other sound. The master of the house (which was close to the water's edge) soon appeared, and having reduced his vociferous animals to something like quietness and order, conducted us to his domicile.

I was agreeably surprised by the comforts of the interior, which (it being a bachelor's house) we were not prepared to find endowed with the luxuries of sofas and rocking chairs, or with the abundance of books, and even new publications, which, mixed up with fishing-rods, guns, and other symptoms of rural sports, lay scattered about. Supper was announced soon after our arrival, and I need not say, that we did ample justice to the venison-steaks, poached eggs and bacon, and broiled fowls, which were provided for us, while our host apologized for the toughness of the beef-steaks, by saying, that he had only *that morning shot the bull from which they were cut.* Large herds of wild cattle, as well as deer, abound in these distant solitudes, and the former, it is said, are not a little fierce and dangerous when molested. We were waited upon by a very pretty, and apparently well-behaved, *yaller gal,* Cecile by

name. She, like the greater part of the Louisiana coloured people, spoke the French language alone, and she was moreover nearly a *blonde* in complexion. Her vocation had formerly been one which is very common among the New Orleans negresses—namely, that of attending to the *coiffeur* of ball-going ladies, for the moderate charge of a dollar a week. Cecile complained greatly of the dulness of her present life, and also of some other grievances, the most important of which was the refusal by her present master to permit a negro preacher to exercise his vocation on the plantation.

We did not get under way the following morning so early as we ought to have done, considering the distance we had to go, and the uncertainty that must necessarily attend our movements, owing to the possibility of our losing our way, becoming short of fuel, and many other contingencies. We had been rash enough to volunteer the towing of a heavy barge, which was at first fastened astern; this, however, not being found to answer, it was *fixed* alongside, when, owing to the undue weight on one quarter, our luckless and labouring vessel was turned completely round, and so sudden was the movement, that before any one was aware of the catastrophe, we were *crashing* through the overhanging boughs of a live oak, which was most

inopportunely in our way, and only escaped personal injury by throwing ourselves flat on the deck. The consequence of these and other mishaps was, that throughout the day there was a sensible diminution of speed, and that, towards evening, the engineer informed us, not only that our wood was nearly exhausted, but that something had gone wrong with the frail and nearly worn-out machinery of the engine, so that we must remain where we were for the night.

The place where we were now *fixed*, was not one which (had we been free agents) we should have chosen for our night quarters: it was a broad expanse of water, but still not so extensive as to prevent our seeing the reedy shores on either side, and as a thick steamy fog was rising round us, we agreed that we had never seen a location better adapted for the nursery of fever and ague than the one in which chance, or, as we suspected, the *intentions* of the engineer and his companion had placed us. The idea (to unclimatized Europeans) of spending the night in so unwholesome a place, was not an agreeable one, but we had nothing to do but to make the best of it; so a bed was made for me *alongside* of the engine on a heap of cloaks, while the rest of the party chose the softest planks they could find, and laid themselves down on the damp deck.

Before six o'clock the next morning the bustle of departure began, and with the first rays of morning light we were astir. From under the shelter of my engine room I had the amusement of hearing a most obliging offer made by the Yankee engineer to my companion outside. They were both washing their faces from wooden buckets, and wiping them with marvellously small pieces of cotton cloth; which attempt at ablution having been completed, the courteous engineer made a most obliging offer of his tooth-brush, (which, be it known, had evidently seen some service;) he *worded* the offer thus, 'I guess now, you'd like the loan of that ere article—it isn't every one I'd like to lend it to, and that's a fact; but I expect you Britishers are kinder particular about *clean* things.'

We enjoyed some hot coffee exceedingly after our *camping* out, and no sooner was our morning meal concluded, than the engineer set to work to repair damages, and we were soon 'ready for sea,' and again on our voyage. Towards the middle of the day the channels became gradually wider, till at length we came to the open sea, 'without a mark, without a bound!' And how fresh and clear and healthy it seemed, when contrasted with the muddy canals, and rushy weedy streams we had been passing through. A long low island, by name Barataria, was the place to which we were

bound; it was inhabited by an old Spaniard, Don Ribiera, by name, who would be happy, we were told, to give us shelter for the night. No sooner was our craft in sight, than the Don, on hospitable thoughts intent, sent off a boat to bring us to his house, which was about a mile from the place where we were.

The greater part of the island of Barataria is planted with sugar cane, which is said to produce a very fine crop, and there is no doubt that the property might be made still more valuable than it is, by expending a comparatively small sum of money in redeeming a portion of the land from the occasional encroachments of the sea, owing to which it is at present rendered useless for any purposes of cultivation. The whole of the island is extremely low, so much so as to be scarcely visible till you arrive very near it, but when once landed there is a good deal to admire, particularly in the thick groves of orange trees which grow in every direction.

Don Ribiera is an aged Spaniard, who, in consequence of his straitened means, found himself compelled to sell a portion of his paternal property in order to pay some of his numerous creditors. The *Don* has a great many slaves, among whom (the *Donna* preferring the gayer society of the city) he lives in a state of patriarchal

simplicity. No sooner had we landed, than the old Spaniard waddled down to receive us, and to offer us the use of his house, as long as we chose to remain on the island. Our next greeting proceeded from a tribe of negro women and girls, of all shades of colour, from jet black to clear brunette; they spoke little of any language besides a very indifferent mongrel Spanish, and it was evident that they enjoyed a considerable degree of liberty and licence. I never heard such garrulity in my life as on that occasion; they all talked at once, and each had a grievance to complain of, and a wrong to be redressed; the overseer being the especial object of their hatred, and the originator (by their account) of all their grievances.

We were conducted through a grove of orange-trees to a small house, about three hundred yards from that occupied by Don Ribiera and his dark family, and from which, through the trees, we could catch glimpses of the blue waters of the then tranquil gulf. The Don endeavoured to make us as comfortable as circumstances would permit, and gave us a profusion of eggs and oysters—the only food, excepting occasionally some tolerable fish, in which he constantly indulged. At night, when I adjourned to our lonely little dwelling, which (after the departure of half a dozen chattering and most

persevering black attendants) we had all to ourselves, I greatly enjoyed the breath of the cool sea-breeze as it blew over the delicious blossoms of the orange-trees; the latter were loaded with fruit and blossom, and the night air was quite heavy with perfume.

By the accounts of the women, it appeared that the overseer was a hard task-master, and that punishment was frequent on the island; with all this they did not look unhappy, for they had food in abundance, a good hospital to be nursed in when sick, and a skilful white doctor to attend them. Still, on the whole, I am inclined to think that the government of Barataria is not too well conducted, and that many abuses on the island call loudly for reform. As a proof of this, I shall tell you a story which relates to a most tragical event of very recent occurrence on the plantation.

One of the young negroes possessed a wife, Selina by name, to whom he was much attached; it appeared, however, that his affection was neither appreciated nor returned by its ungrateful object, for she amused herself with carrying on an open flirtation with the overseer—the predecessor of the man we found on the island. Now, far from considering such attentions as a disgrace, the coloured women are almost invariably too proud of the attentions of white men, in any grade of society, to

be very scrupulous about receiving them, so poor Josef being aware of his wife's weakness, and that *there* 'where he had garnered up his heart,' he was most ruthlessly deceived, became a prey to jealousy, and eager for revenge. Selina's claims to beauty consisted in a jet black skin, a laughing face, plenty of white teeth, and a tolerable figure; she was, in short, the black belle of the island, and gave herself all the ordinary and accustomed airs of a reigning beauty. On the proceedings of this fickle dark one did the injured husband keep a watchful eye, and in order the better to arrive at the truth, he one day ensconced himself in an obscure corner of the overseer's own house, whence he could (without being seen himself) follow the movements and hear the conversation of the *friends*, as they walked backwards and forwards under the wooden verandah of the building. Poor Josef, 'Haply, for *he was* black,' and had not 'soft parts of conversation;' he did not *quite* re-echo the words of the poet—

> I had rather be a toad,
> And live upon the vapour of a dungeon,
> Than keep a corner of the thing I love
> For others——

but for all that his jealousy was neither less violent, nor his vengeance less signal, than that of the misguided Moor. In a fit of the wildest exasperation, he flew to his hut, and commenced sharpening his

axe, in preparation for the deed of retribution which he meditated.

But I will not dwell upon the painful details—that very night Josef murdered the overseer, and after having, with another blow, inflicted a ghastly wound on his faithless wife, he fled for safety to the woods. The momentary shelter afforded by the small groves of trees which grow on the island was soon found by the unhappy fugitive to be insufficient for the purpose of securing him from discovery. The numerous scouts who were sent in search of him lined the wood in every direction, and finding himself hotly pursued, the unhappy wretch at length made for the sugar-house, and took refuge behind the boiler. A powerful and well armed man *at* bay, strengthened with the courage which despair can give, was what no man on the island had courage to face. Notwithstanding the repeated orders that were given, no one could be found willing to come to close quarters with the man, who evidently intended to sell his life as dearly as he could; so, at length, despairing of taking him by any other means, they shot him where he stood.

It was a sad story, for Josef had been a general favourite, and the provocations he had endured went far to justify the act he had committed. Neither *his* death, nor that of the overseer, made

any impression on his wife; she recovered from her wounds, and became, as was evident to us, (from the ill-concealed jealousy of the others,) the favourite slave of old Don Ribiera. The negroes being (as is well known) a most superstitious race, the horror they evinced of the spot where their companion was killed was very great. No one among them would venture alone, and after dark, into the sugar-house, unless absolutely compelled to do so; and this fact having come to the ears of the overseer, it became a favourite punishment with him, (and a most cruel one it was,) to cause such slaves as had been guilty of trifling offences, to pass the night alone in the dreaded spot, where they imagined the ghost of their deceased comrade to be continually lurking.

We remained three days on the famed island of Barataria, riding on horseback daily, and making our observations on the state and condition of the negroes, which observations were not, on the whole, very favourable either to the owner or his system; in short, from all I have been able to gather during our sojourn in slave countries, I have arrived at the conviction that the Spaniards are harder task-masters, and less fitted in every way for the great responsibility of slave property, than either the French or the Americans. I had the same impression when I visited Cuba, and in the Gulf of

Mexico I have seen no reason to change my opinion.

We took our departure in a very pretty and fast sailing schooner of about twenty tons—the property of the 'Lord of the *Isle*,' who accompanied us part of the way on our return. The chattering women accompanied me to the water's edge, kissing my hand, and a few of them even contriving to shed some *unnatural* tears on our departure. We had of course left a few dollars with them, in return for their obsequious attendance, but I confess that I was not prepared to find that (not content with their legitimate gains) they had emptied my purse! 'Twas something,' and on taking it out soon after our embarkation, I found to my dismay that ''twas nothing!' Though my dollars had 'enriched' the 'Selinas' and 'Angelinas' of the Barataria plantation, they had 'left me poor indeed,' and poorer perhaps in my good opinion of the black race than in anything else, for the idea I had formerly entertained of their skill in cunning and trickery was by no means lessened by this last occurrence.

We had nothing in our schooner, by way of cargo, but Indian corn; this was thrown loosely into the vessel, which was not decked, and as the husks were still on the corn, the *produce* formed an agreeable seat. On it we reclined in luxurious

indolence, the old Spaniard smoking his pipe in dignified silence, and a favourable breeze wafting us gently over the smooth and sunlit sea; we all agreed that it was real and positive enjoyment, and were very far from wishing our sail to be terminated, when we came in sight of some more low land, on which was the sugar plantation belonging to our friend, Mr. B——.

# LETTER XXXVI.

MORE ABOUT THE BLACKS—VOYAGE AMONG THE ISLANDS—IMMENSE SLAUGHTER OF ALLIGATORS—A MID-DAY MEAL IN THE WOODS—EXQUISITE SCENERY—MOSQUITOES—GAILY DRESSED INDIANS—EXTREME HOSPITALITY OF THE SOUTHERN PLANTERS—BATTLE-FIELD OF NEW ORLEANS—RETURN TO THE CITY.

*New Orleans, March.*

I MUST now send you the sequel of our adventures in the Mexican Archipelago, and show you how we returned to this place after our cruize. Mr. B——'s overseer, on the island, resided in a small house not far from the beach, and was blessed with a black wife, and a large family of dingy children.

Soon after our arrival, I, with considerable difficulty, mounted the most enormous horse it was ever my fate to see, (the creature measured eighteen hands,) and rode to inspect a fort of great strength, which the American Government are constructing at an immense cost, and no inconsiderable difficulty, on this desolate spot, but except this erection, which (though not as yet in a very advanced

state) spoke highly for 'Uncle Sam's' energy and liberality, where public works are concerned, there was little on the island to see, or to remark upon.

We returned to the house, and enjoyed a plentiful, if not a refined supper, during which the black lady stood behind the chair of her lord and master the overseer, without being allowed to partake of the repast, though the children, to the number of seven, sat round the table perfectly happy, and quite at their ease.

As in the island of Barataria, we slept in a detached house, for which arrangement I confess I was not at all sorry. We saw nothing either to like or approve in the inmates of the principal building, and the state of semi-intoxication in which the lady of the house was found, when summoned to conduct to me to my abode, did not tend to give me a higher opinion of her qualifications for domestic life. She did contrive to stagger across the court to light me to my chamber, but that was quite as much as she was capable of doing, and it was with great difficulty that I ejected her from the room, and barred the door against her return. These details are disagreeable, and I only give them from a wish to offer a veracious description of plantation life.

We rose at five o'clock the following morning, and leaving the old (and I confess, I think, somewhat disreputable) *Don* behind us, embarked in a

small boat which was to convey us through a most intricate navigation, to a large plantation, the owner of which was a friend of our companion, Mr. B——. Our boat was a small, four-oared one, and as it was quite doubtful how long our voyage might be prolonged, we took with us a good stock of provisions. There was a sail in the boat, which was occasionally of use, but when hoisted it required such constant shifting, owing to the frequent turns in the channels, through which we were obliged to thread our way, that it rather delayed than hastened our progress.

The sun was darting fierce rays over our heads, and we had no awning; but there was a pleasant breeze to keep us alive, and our boatmen rowed cheerily on towards the narrow waters. About twelve o'clock, and when the sun was at its height, I was aroused from a reverie, in which I was pondering on 'things' not only 'long enough ago,' but also far enough off, by the sudden stopping of our craft, and by the announcement made by one of our boatmen, in a loud whisper, that there was an alligator close to us. And there, true enough, he was—a monstrous animal—within a dozen yards of the boat, and basking on the bank, in happy unconsciousness of our approach. One of our rifles was out in a moment, but the hideous reptile was too quick for us, for being doubtless awoke by the noise of the boat going through the water, he

raised his ugly head, and even before the rifle could be levelled at him, was splashing away in the stream with astonishing rapidity.

With the next, which we saw about five minutes afterwards, we were more successful: he, too, was resting on the bank, and being, I suppose, of a more somniferous nature, was shot, in his only vulnerable part—namely, under the shoulder. His death was almost instantaneous, and his body was afterwards hideous to look upon: he might be, as far as we could guess, about fifteen feet in length, and his head appeared to be nearly a third of the length of his whole body. The teeth were frightfully large and long, and the whole appearance of the animal disgusting and *vicious*-looking in the extreme. These alligators are very dangerous creatures; though on land their attacks may be easily avoided, from the unwieldy length of their bodies, which renders *turning* to seize their prey a difficult evolution, in the water they are much to be dreaded, and stories are told, some of which are well authenticated, of *bathers* losing their limbs and lives through the attacks of these voracious creatures. I also heard an account of a poor servant girl, who, while washing some linen in one of the canals in the neighbourhood of New Orleans, had her arm seized by an alligator, and being dragged beneath the surface of the water, became a prey to the hungry monster, and was

seen no more. The skin of the alligator, which is very thick and tough, and, moreover, soft to the touch, is used very much for the covering of saddles; but except for that purpose, I never heard of them being put to any use after death. We saw hundreds in the course of that sunny sail among the Bayous, and a great many were shot; but notwithstanding my dislike to the animal, and my conviction of his destructive qualities, I soon grew wearied and pained by the indiscriminate slaughter, and could not bear to witness their death struggles as they floundered about in the water, dyeing the stream with the life-blood which flowed from their wounds.

One only boat, besides our own, did we see on that day's pilgrimage; she was still smaller than ours, and besides one boatman, contained only a female and three children. They did not always pursue the same course with ourselves, but diverged often into out-of-the-way watery lanes, and round mysterious corners, where for a time they were hidden from our view. Still, we never lost sight of them for long together, and it was evident that their destination was the same as ours.

Towards four in the afternoon, exhausted, hungry, and parched by the almost tropical heat of the sun, we reached such a pleasant grove of thick evergreen oaks, that we determined to run our boat into a creek, which apparently traversed the

wood from one side to the other, and there remain to rest ourselves. With considerable difficulty we forced our way through the thick and overhanging branches of trees; but when we were fairly in, and sheltered in our little harbour, the delicious change in the atmosphere, and the enchanting beauty of the spot, repaid even those who had toiled the most for all their exertions. The branches of the live oaks literally interlaced each other over our heads, making (with the variety of beautiful creeping plants budding with their early green) a screen, through which the rays of the sun strove in vain to penetrate. The palmetto spread out its graceful fan-like leaves above the short turf, and the air resounded with the song of many birds, already beginning to build their nests among the mossy branches of the oaks. The bright scarlet plumage of the *cardinal*, or Virginian nightingale, as it hopped about in search of food, and the more subdued, but still brilliant coloured *blue-bird*, gave life and animation to the scene; nor must the graceful active little squirrels be forgotten, as they sprang from bough to bough with fearless agility.

The ilexes were of gigantic size, and the short velvet-like turf was so prettily diversified by patches of ornamental shrubs, that one found it difficult to believe that the hand of man had not done something towards *bringing* out, and making the most of the great natural beauties of this singularly

picturesque spot. Here, then, and near to the abode of what we immediately saw must be that of an Indian family, we agreed to dine, and if possible enjoy a *siesta* after our fatigues. We chose the opposite side of the stream from that on which the pretty little log hut had been erected, for we did not choose to deprive ourselves of the charm which its *presence* added to the *picture* before us. We arranged our repast under the boughs of a far-spreading live oak, there where the 'rill ran o'er, and round, fern, flowers and ivy creep.'

Fantastically tangled; the *bright rills*
Are *fringed* with early blossoms; through the grass
The quick-eyed lizard rustles, and the bills
Of summer birds sing welcome as *we* pass;
Flowers fresh in hue, and many in their class,
Implore the pausing step, and with their dyes
Dance in the soft breeze in a fairy mass;
The sweetness of the violet's deep blue eyes,
Kiss'd by the breath of heaven, seems colour'd by its skies.

I hardly know *when* we should have found it in our hearts to leave our rural banquet hall, had not the encroachments of myriads of mosquitoes warned us that it was time to depart. The sting of those spiteful little creatures, and the fact of two of our party having encountered snakes within a few yards of the spot where we had been dining, decided us to continue our voyage without further delay. We had no one with us skilled in the capture of the rattlesnake; among the negroes, men are often

found who are so skilful in the art of securing them, that they feel no alarm at their approach, but, armed only with a cleft stick, they advance fearlessly upon the dangerous reptile, and, quick as thought, thrust their forked weapon into the animal's back, thus pinning him to the earth, and depriving him of the power of motion.

As we descended to our boat, we saw two Indians standing before the door of their hut, who were contemplating us with great composure, and without any apparent surprise. Their costume was a very scanty one, consisting merely of a short blanket thrown over one shoulder, and drawn round their persons; their limbs were bare, with the exception of the moccasins worn on the legs, and a little red and blue paint traced on the dark skin of their muscular arms. Their faces were free from any such disfigurement, and the head of each was encircled by a species of *fillet*, of what metal composed I know not, but it *glittered like gold*, and gave the wearers a decidedly dignified appearance. One was quite a young man, and the other was probably his father, as he was middle-aged, and the two were strikingly alike; we left them standing on the bank, their brilliant head-dresses shining in the light of the setting sun, and neither of them deigning to turn their heads to watch us, as we rowed on through the creek.

It is said by many, who have had good oppor-

tunities of observing them, that the intellectual faculties possessed by the generality of the Indian tribes are extremely limited, and in this opinion phrenologists, who have given their attention to the subject, usually agree. It is certain that the many missionaries and instructors who have settled among them have effected very little in the shape of religious good or intellectual development; but to this rule the Cherokees certainly form an exception, as they are evidently far superior (mentally) to any of the other Indian tribes. *They* have made great and rapid progress in the arts and sciences, have schools and colleges of their own, from which *well-dressed* and efficient men have gone forth in various professions, as surgeons, and even as ministers of religion.

But again we were among the Bayous, followed as before, at a respectful distance, by our *tender*, the small *family boat*, which had accompanied us through the day. Night closed her dusky wings upon us, suddenly, as is her habit in these low latitudes, before we reached our resting-places, so that when we *did* arrive at the plantation to which we were bound, it was in darkness that we walked from the shore to the house. And to what shall I compare the boundless, *open-house* hospitality of the southern planter? Shall I go to the far north for its prototype, or shall I tell you, that it can only be equalled by the Arab in his desert

home? It is not only the well-dressed traveller, the desirable acquaintance, the flourishing merchant, with whom they may make an *operation*, or the English 'stranger,' who may afford food for their curiosity, who are always kindly welcomed among them; no, the South-American country gentleman is 'at home' to one and all, and the boat, or wagon load, of care-worn and hungry emigrants is sure to receive the same warm-hearted greeting from the millionaire of the south, as would be bestowed on a party of visitors of his own class and degree.

At Mr. ——'s plantation, we had the satisfaction of finding the refinements of life added to the frank welcome of less civilized society, and I cannot deny that, after the rude existence we had been lately enduring, it *was* enjoyment to find oneself once more in a comfortable drawing-room, and to rest again upon ottomans and soft cushions. The family was a large one of grown-up sons and daughters, and the party in the supper-room numbered eighteen, when, at ten o'clock, we sat down to that social meal. Covers were laid for as many as chose to enter, and partake of the many good things which were spread on the table, of the delicious tea and coffee, and hot meats and cold meats, with preserves of all kinds, cranberry, strawberry, and peach—to say nothing of the cakes and the bread, both corn and wheat, which filled up every corner of the table.

Having enjoyed my tea, and with it some excellent 'chicken fixings,' I was quite willing to retire to my room for the night, when a bustle was heard at the door, and in walked the *female* and the three children whose progress in the small boat we had watched during our voyage. She was the wife of a stonemason employed at the Fort, and as she was desirous of going to 'the city,' the superintendent of the works had allowed her the use of a boat as far as the plantation. They, as well as ourselves, were fed and lodged for the night, though in a different part of the house, and the stonemason's wife, whom I saw for a moment, seemed to make herself quite as much at home as if she were in an hotel or a boarding-house. My bedroom was delightfully comfortable, and it was delightful to ensconce oneself under the clean white mosquito *bars*, (namely *curtains*,) and to feel that there was some chance of awaking in the morning without having been half devoured by those irritating little creatures.

The plantation was on a narrow strip of land, skirted on one side by the Mississippi, and on the other by the Bayous, and as we were to embark early in the morning for New Orleans, in one of the many Mississippi steamers bound for the city, we left the house at six o'clock, and passing through an avenue of orange-trees, reached the river, and also a steam-boat, on which we imme-

diately embarked ourselves and our belongings. We breakfasted on board, and two hours afterwards disembarked at Mr. B——'s sugar plantation, also situated on the Mississippi river.

This plantation is considered as *the* model one of all those on the river, and from what we saw during our short visit, it well deserves the good opinion entertained of it. All the latest agricultural improvements were here acted upon, and we saw the sub-soil plough at work, loosening and breaking up the earth two feet beneath the surface. The good results of which process were, we were told, quite marvellous. The new system, also, of boiling *in vacuo,* was practised at the two sugar-houses, and the sugar which we saw was, in consequence, very nearly white. Having dined, gathered flowers, admired the regularity and order of the negro quarters, and the apparently happy condition of the black dependents, we set off in a very European carriage belonging to Mr. B——, and being drawn by a pair of fast horses, made rapid progress along the river's bank towards the city.

The last part of the journey was performed by railroad, which ran through rather a pretty country, and close to the battle-field of New Orleans, and to the house occupied by the unfortunate General Pakenham previously to the engagement. To an inexperienced person, the first impression made

by a survey of the ground where the battle was fought is, that the position of the English was such as to render their defeat inevitable. The place they occupied lies between the river and the swamp; the distance between each, not being (as I should imagine) more than half a mile. One flank was thus exposed to the assaults of the gun-boats on the river, while swarms of riflemen in the swamp poured in a deadly fire on the other. In front of our troops, the Americans had raised a barrier of cotton bales, which formed a fortification of immense and impregnable strength. Against this formidable obstacle rolled on the 'fiery mass of living valour, but alas! they only rushed against their foes to die! And great and awful was the loss of life on that disastrous day, when English heroism was opposed to American craft, unaided as that heroism was by any local advantages, and thinned as their ranks had been by *desertions*, and by an unhealthy and enervating climate. Many of those who were engaged on the American side have assured me that the acts of heroism performed by the British soldiery on that day were most worthy of their country, and of the brave commander who led them to the field, and 'foremost, fighting fell!'

It was late at night when we reached New Orleans, and relieved the anxiety of our friends, some of whom had, in consequence of the somewhat ad-

venturous character of our expedition, and our protracted stay, become anxious about us. How rapidly spring approaches in these latitudes! and how cheering it is, when admiring the fresh green leaves and blossoms of the trees, to feel *sure* they will not be checked, as in our less genial climate, by biting winds, and the cruel frosts of April and May! In the course of little more than a fortnight, the atmosphere has become like summer in England, and we sit at open windows, while the bright oleanders, and the budding orange trees, and myrtles, give out their sweets and beauties around us. And now farewell for the present, I hardly think I shall write again from this place, but it is possible I may do so.

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# LETTER XXXVII.

MELANCHOLY MENTAL CONDITION OF THE NEGROES AFRICAN BLOCKADE—THE COLONY OF LIBERIA—ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF SLAVERY IN AMERICA—DIFFICULTY OF MAKING THE BLACKS PERFORM ANY ACTUAL LABOUR—MISERIES THEY UNDERGO IN THE FREE STATES—CHANCES OF ABOLITION—INJUDICIOUS INTERFERENCE OF GREAT BRITAIN.

*New Orleans—March.*

IN compliance with your request, that I would give you all the information in my power on the subject of slavery in this country, I shall devote a letter to this interesting topic. It is indeed a most painful reflection, that three millions of human beings should be held in bondage, and compelled to labour, like the beasts of the field, having no will of their own, but being, in point of fact, mere human machines moved at the will and pleasure of their owners. But if slavery itself, as an abstract idea be painful, how infinitely more so does it become, when we consider that a vast number of these despised people are living without God in the world, being entirely destitute of religious instruction, and far removed from any of

the offices of the church. Still, as a counterpoise to such frightful evils as these, we must recollect that the negro race in America are at least Christians in name, and are so far raised above the heathen darkness of their own land.

The partial evils of the system, great as they are, should not make us blind to its possible advantages, nor can we even attempt to understand in *this* case, more than in any other, that great mystery of our Faith—the permission of *evil* in the world. 'The judgments of the Almighty are indeed unsearchable, and his ways past finding out,' but the more I reflect on the existence of slavery, the more am I (in all due humility) inclined to believe, that it is the *means* employed for working out a great and most important *end*, and that the much-blamed and reprobated *institution* of slavery is one of the instruments made use of, for the eventual civilization and Christian instruction of the black race throughout the world. What a field for thought does this idea open before us! Almost simultaneously with the discovery of the New World was the abolition of slavery throughout Europe, so that, by degrees, that great moral curse was *transferred* (if I may so call it) to the Western hemisphere; having, after an existence of thousands of years, at length disappeared from the Old World, before the light of civilization and the blessings of Christianity.

The obloquy of having sown the first seeds of this pernicious plant in North America rests on the Dutch, who, in the month of August, 1620, landed twenty negroes at 'James' River; 'and the immense profits realized from their labour was the chief inducement held out to the numerous adventurers who flocked to the New World. The traffic in human flesh was in those days (as it has been in our own) a most profitable and lucrative one, and was a speculation in which most of the nations of Europe were deeply engaged. The negro population in the western hemisphere must now amount to seven or eight millions, exclusive of those in South America; and allowing, as I before remarked, that there *are* great evils attending the system, it would, I think, be absurd not to admit the immense advantages they possess in their moral, intellectual, and physical condition, as compared with that of their black brethren in Africa; nor can it be denied that both the black and white races have derived reciprocal benefit from the servitude to which the poor African is compelled to submit. And here, in justice to the Americans, I must state a fact which admits of no dispute—namely, that in every respect the condition of the negro race in the United States is superior to that in which they are found in Cuba, and also to that of the free blacks in the West Indies.

But there is still another point deserving of

mention, as regards the conduct of the Americans towards the black race, and that is, (startling as the assertion may at first appear,) that the Americans, in my opinion, deserve the credit of having taken the only rational, and effective step towards the suppression of the slave trade. They have not, it is true, expended millions of money, and sacrificed thousands of lives in blockading the coast of Africa, thereby increasing tenfold the horrors of that inhuman traffic, but their exertions through the means of their missionaries to propagate the gospel, and civilize the nations on the African coast have been unceasing, and more than all this, the settlement of Liberia, established by the American Colonization Society, will, in the end, be no doubt the means of putting a stop to the slave trade.

The colony of Liberia is entirely composed of emancipated slaves, sent thither from the United States, and its population already amounts to about ten thousand souls. Their territory extends several hundred miles along the coast of Africa, and various settlements have been made at different points by the several slave states of the Union. The system of government in Liberia is a representative one; it is similar to that of the United States, but no white man is allowed to become a resident in the colony. The report which has been just made of this settlement by the Colonization Society is as

follows:—"The republic contains several flourishing towns, has its own legislature, courts of justice, numerous schools and churches, two or more newspapers—that its inhabitants are successfully engaged in the pursuits of agriculture, trade, and commerce—and that the condition of the entire people, for health, industry, temperance, good order, morality and religion, will compare favourably with any portion of our own country: we may well believe that the success of the project has far outstripped the most sanguine expectations of its early friends, and exhibits results which are an ample reward for all their benevolent and self-denying labours. Truly 'the wilderness' has been made to 'rejoice and blossom as the rose.'"

Experience has, unfortunately, taught us that the negro race when left entirely to their own resources, and solely dependent on their *own* intelligence and industry, instead of *rising*, will rather retrograde than otherwise in the social scale; still, as regards the settlements in Liberia, it must be remembered that a perpetual stream of industrious and intelligent men will be constantly pouring in from the United States: men who, it is fair to conclude, will have earned the boon of freedom by their previous good conduct, and whose example and experience will tend to keep up the respectability of the colony. May we not, with these facts before us, come to the conclusion that the

bondage of the black race in America is a medium through which it is probable that the heathen portion of benighted Africa may in time be civilized, when 'the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.'

I am aware that in England the opinion is very prevalent, that slavery is injurious to the interests of the United States, and that its existence will probably lead at some future time to a dissolution of the Union. This opinion was at one time my own; but, since living in the country, I have taken quite another view of the case, and am convinced that slavery, (*unfortunately*, I must add,) is not only the main source of the wealth of America, but that the advantages derived from it render the Northern States and those of the South so dependent on each other, that a separation would be the ruin of both. The value of the annual produce raised by slave labour may, at the very least, be estimated at twenty millions sterling; and the industry and enterprise of the North, whether they be engaged in manufactures, shipping, or commerce, must always find their most profitable market in the South. Does not this tend to prove that the emancipation of the slaves would be a severe and deadly blow to the general welfare and prosperity of the Union? All my conclusions are, of course, drawn from the supposition, or rather the conviction, that without slave labour the South

would not produce cotton, sugar, rice, or tobacco, for it is a fact generally admitted, (and, indeed, proved by experience,) that the blacks, unless compelled to do so, will never work in a country where the liberal hand of nature, by supplying all their wants for a minimum of labour, would seem to offer a plea for, as well as a premium to, indolence. Even though among the *masses* a *few* should be found willing to work, the price of their labour would be, of course, so exorbitant, that it would render the culture of the ground totally unremunerative; and that this would infallibly be the case is, I think, sufficiently proved by the present state of our own possessions in the West Indies, where, though the necessaries of life are not half so abundant as in the United States, it has been found impossible to induce the blacks to labour.

Great glory be to England for the noble act which she performed in emancipating her slaves. The deed is registered among the brilliant records of her unbounded charities for ever; and verily those whose Christian benevolence and compassionate feelings prompted the measure, will have their reward. But, in the meantime, what is the result? that the prosperity of our colonies is at an end, and that the condition of the blacks is certainly not improved by that which has cost the people of England so much *public* money, and caused in private life so much severe distress;

neither must it be forgotten that, since the supply of labour in the West Indies has been found wanting, slavery in other countries has received a remarkable impulse.* That the abolitionists of England are generally actuated by the noblest and most philanthropic motives, there can be no doubt, but that their sensibilities are also unduly worked upon by the most marvellous tales concerning the sufferings of the slaves in the United States is, at least, equally certain. The very name of slavery strikes harshly and discordantly on English ears, all our sympathies are at once enlisted on the side of the black race, and we view with suspicion any attempt, either to palliate the evils of the system, or to convince our reason that there is anything but suffering in the portion of the negro slave.

During this, and my former visit to the United States, I have passed nearly a year in the South, and have had good opportunities of ascertaining the true condition of the negro race in this country. This being the case, I have come to the conclusion that the evil exists here in its most modified form, and that the *domestic* slaves are the least unhappy *menials* in the world; moreover, I am convinced that they are very far from being so severely worked as most of the *servants* in free countries. The

* I speak of the West Indies and Cuba as they were when I visited them three years ago.

accounts of the atrocities committed in the plantations are, I have reason to believe, greatly exaggerated: that a great many shocking acts of cruelty and oppression *are* perpetrated by some of the slave-owners in the out of the way parts of Arkansas and the Red River plantations, cannot, I fear, be denied; and, moreover, that the lax state of morals is, in many parts of the South, painful to think upon; but these instances are the exception to the rule, and I have no hesitation in asserting, that the universal public feeling in the South is on the side of humanity.

The laws, though imperfectly enforced, and frequently arbitrary as regards the negroes, have, nevertheless, the effect of protecting them in great measure from personal cruelty, and also from flagrant acts of injustice; and when those, at present lawless and half-settled, districts which I have mentioned as the too frequent scenes of outrage and tyranny, shall be placed *more* within the pale of the law and the influence of public opinion, the lot of the slaves will of course be greatly ameliorated. Public opinion in this country is, as I have before said, far more powerful than the laws, and its influence on society is quite irresistible; there are very few plantations to which its scrutinizing eye does not reach, and it not only insures the good treatment of the slave, but acts as a salutary restraint on the evil passions of the

master. The slaves, generally speaking, are well clothed, and abundantly fed, and are, besides, carefully attended during sickness; a large proportion of them *do* receive religious instruction, and in many parts of the southern States, Sabbath-schools have been established, and the number of missionaries employed in preaching the word of God amongst them is yearly increasing.

It is true that the law forbids the education of slaves, but notwithstanding this, many of them are well and carefully instructed, and it is impossible to conjecture how great, by this time, might have been their intellectual and moral improvement, had not the injudicious interference of the northern abolitionists effectually arrested the course of amelioration which was, a few years ago, so steadily advancing. That it is the *interest* of the slave-owner to educate his negroes, is a fact which is sufficiently obvious, for a clever engineer, clerk, or handicraftsman of any description, is worth three or four times as much as a common field hand, and the owners of slaves whom they have thus rendered valuable by education can, by letting them out for the day, turn their services to a most profitable account.

Taking a dispassionate view of the condition of the coloured population in the United States, and of all the circumstances connected with the Slave Question, I must confess to you that the conduct

of the abolitionists of the north, (highly as it stands in their own opinion, and upheld as it is by the voices of so many of the *well-meaning* in our own, and other countries,) appears to me far more blameable than that of the slave-owners in the south. The latter are suffering under a baneful infliction which they owe to the cupidity of their forefathers, and which infliction they *feel* to be such, and would willingly rid themselves of could they do so without entailing certain ruin on themselves and their country. But, whilst considering the probable good or evil likely to be derived from abolition, it must not be forgotten that amongst those who would suffer most severely from the emancipation of the slaves, (were such a measure to be carried into effect,) would be those of our fellow countrymen (amounting to more than a million) who are engaged in the manufacture and sale of cotton goods. It is now an acknowledged fact, that the necessary supply of the raw material of the quality required, can only be produced in the United States and by slave labour: this supply Great Britain remunerates by the annual payment of ten millions sterling, and we may therefore imagine how few persons there are, throughout her Majesty's dominions, who do not indirectly encourage slavery, by wearing about them the produce of negro toil.

I shall now give you my reasons for blaming so

strongly the abolitionists of the Northern States, and also show you *why* I consider that their conduct, with reference to the blacks, is both inconsistent and unjust. The treatment of the negroes in the free states is alone sufficient to prove the *injustice* of the abolitionists, and when we consider that the latter *profess* to be actuated by the most philanthropic motives,—to have a horror of slavery, and to act upon the principle that 'God having made all men equal,'—*they* would confer upon the slaves the blessings of freedom, we come at once upon the inconsistency of which I accuse them. Theirs are high-sounding professions, but the *reality* and the practice are sadly wanting, for the enjoyment by the negro of equal rights with the white man is a privilege which exists only in name.

Let us follow a slave who has gained his freedom, and who is in the first flush of joy at his release from bondage; he has come from the plantations in the South, where he was born and bred, to the city of Philadelphia, the place which he has been taught to regard as the paradise of his race, the home of his *friends*, and the abode where he might hope to enjoy all the delights of his newly-bought liberty. He arrives in the city, but it does not take even the short space of four-and-twenty hours to convince him that all his hopes are doomed to disappointment: the *friends* he had longed to greet, are, *he* finds, his greatest enemies, for,

though the *law* considers him as a citizen, and allows him the right of suffrage, *they* deny him the privilege. Again, the public schools are, by the *law* of the land open alike to the black child and the white, but the *friends* of the former deny admission to those of coloured blood! In short, the poor negro finds, all too soon, that Public Opinion and inveterate prejudice have set the mark of ignominy upon him, that he is avoided as carefully as is the leper of the east, and that he is banished alike from the society of his fellow-creatures and from the tabernacle of his God! To quote the opinion of a very clever writer*—'He is left in the most pitiable of all conditions—that of *a masterless slave.*'

In comparing the relative positions of the Blacks in the Slave States and those of the North, I must candidly confess to you, that I consider that of the former as infinitely the most deserving of compassion. I always experienced a certain feeling very much approaching to disgust, when I have happened to hear any of the indiscriminate abuse which is so often heaped upon the people of the South, by the northern abolitionists; every sort of crime is generally attributed to the slave-owners, they are execrated as bringing *ruin* on the North, and as a set of bankrupts from whom not a cent is

* Hamilton's 'Men and Manners in America.'

to be extracted. If this be true, the question which naturally suggests itself is, what becomes of the hundred millions of dollars produced by slave labour? But this is a query which the complainers themselves can best answer.

While endeavouring to give you a description of the state and treatment of the blacks, I forgot to mention that the northern men are almost invariably hard taskmasters, and that if you happen to hear of a plantation in the South, where an undue degree of severity is exercised towards the negroes, the chances are, in nine cases out of ten, that either the master, or overseer, or both, are Yankees. I have heard it remarked, that the possession of slaves has a tendency to brutalize both the mind and the manners, as well as to harden the heart; in regard to the former assertion, I can only say, that the southern gentlemen *I* have known, have been generally much more refined than those of the North, and indeed, I hardly think that the celebrated diplomatist would have passed that over-severe, but pithy censure on Americans, '*Ils sont des fiers cochons, et des cochons fiers,*' if he had only been in the South, and known the gentlemen thereof.

As to the chances of abolition, about which you are anxious to be informed, there can be, I think, little doubt that the States of Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, and Kentucky will very soon

declare themselves free, and the probability is, that both North Carolina and Missouri will eventually pursue the same course. The fact of the slaves being, in those States, an actual pecuniary evil, renders it a matter of certainty, that some change must ere long be effected; but even supposing that the six States I have mentioned should abolish slavery within their limits, I see no chance of such a proceeding being productive of any good as regards the condition of the unfortunate negroes. Their numbers, in those States, must amount to nearly a million, and it appears almost certain that although the masters would decidedly derive benefit from the measure, the only alteration which it would bring to the negro would be to remove the *locale* of their bondage to the rich and unhealthy bottom lands of Louisiana and Texas, even as their forefathers were formerly transported to the South, when New York and Pennsylvania were declared free States.

If it could be proved by any logic or demonstration, that slavery is, on the whole, decidedly prejudicial to the interests of the United States, I have no doubt that some great national measure would be resorted to in order to remedy the evil; but while the Northern States derive, both directly and indirectly, so much benefit by the continuance of slavery, no such change is likely to occur. It may, perhaps, appear unchristian-like to say so,

but still I believe it is universally allowed that the actions of the American people are guided by their *interests* alone, and that their consciences are deadened by the same selfish views; in short, that the love of dollars is their ruling principle, the pleasant sound of which drowns the still small voice within their breasts. It is this belief, which convinces me, that the abolition of slavery would never be a popular measure with the majority of the American people, and it is for the same reason that I am led to suspect the sincerity of those who, from political or other motives, affect to be the greatest advocates for abolition.

It has been said that the black race in the South are increasing in a greater proportion than the whites, and that the situation of the latter must, consequently, become some day very critical. This observation would have been a just one some years ago, but now the chances of a struggle between the two races are every day becoming less; there are only three States in which the amount of the black population exceeds that of the white, namely, those of South Carolina, Louisiana, and Mississippi, the excess in the first of these is very large, amounting to about sixty thousand, but in each of the two latter it is not more than ten thousand; it must be observed also, with regard to Louisiana and Mississippi, that it is only the white *habitual residents* who are enumerated, for were all the

strangers who are sojourners among them to be included in the estimate, the white population would largely exceed that of the blacks. It is calculated that, during the last ten years, the increase of the whites has been thirty-four per cent, while that of the blacks has not exceeded twenty-three and three-quarters.

That the curse of slavery will rest on the land for generations to come, both in Louisiana and Texas, appears to me almost a certainty, the soil of their cotton and sugar lands being probably the richest in the world, and producing, also, two of the commodities of life which appear most necessary to man. The climate, moreover, is one which precludes the possibility of white labour, and it is therefore fair to conclude that, until the blacks rise to an equality with their present masters, they will be compelled, as heretofore, to labour as slaves. What fate is reserved, in future ages, for the now despised black race is, and must remain, a mystery to us; and if any mighty changes be in store for them, they are at present too distant even for conjecture. It is impossible to justify the *principle* of slavery, and fully as vain to suggest a remedy for the evil. At the Declaration of Independence, seventy years ago, something might possibly have been attempted, though even then the difficulties appeared almost insurmountable. Let us hope that the God of Infinite Justice will not see fit to

leave so large a portion of his creatures in ignorance of his Word, and in a state of slavery for ever; and let us hope, too, that the owners of slaves, will be enabled to see the vast and fearful responsibilities which are entailed upon *them* by the possession, not only of the bodies, but *temporally* of the souls of so many immortal beings. Verily, a strict account will be demanded of those who have not only withheld the word of God from the slaves, but have driven them to the commission of crime through oppression and injustice.

It is in the power of the legislature to do much towards improving the condition of the negro race. At present, many of the laws affecting slaves are not only cruel and unjust, but a disgrace to humanity, and the *friends* of the slaves would do more to benefit their cause by exerting themselves to effect the repeal of such disgraceful statutes than by their injudicious interference with the affairs of the south, and by the virulent censure which they lavish on the slave-owners. It certainly appears that there is no chance at present of a general abolition of slavery in the United States, and the utmost we can hope for in these utilitarian days is, that America will use her power with moderation, and continue her efforts to benefit the black race by means of the African settlements.

One word in regard to the policy of our own country in this matter—namely, that were Great

Britain to devote a twentieth part of the sum which she now annually and very uselessly expends on the prevention of the slave-trade, to a liberal and judicious system of colonization on the coast of Africa, there is every reason to expect that an end could speedily be put to the inhuman and unnatural traffic which has so long been carried on, to the disgrace of humanity, and of the Christian world in particular. America has, in this respect, set us an example which we should not be too proud to follow, and *did* we follow it, the negroes would have far greater cause for thankfulness to England than they have at present, when all they have gained by her injudicious, but well-meant, interference, has been an increase of their sufferings on board the *slavers*, and also of their value on landing, provided always that they have the good fortune to escape death on the passage.

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## LETTER XXXVIII.

NEW CONSTITUTION FOR THE STATE OF LOUISIANA—MR. M'DONOGH—NEW ORLEANS THEATRE—'THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR'—DEPARTURE FROM NEW ORLEANS — INSANE PASSENGER — THE 'PLANTER'S LADY'—GERMAN MUSICIANS—TREMENDOUS STORM—HACKET, THE COMEDIAN—CROSS THE ALLEGHANIES — MAPLE SUGAR—GADSBY'S HOTEL.

*Washington—April.*

PREVIOUSLY to our departure from New Orleans, there were great rejoicings in the city on account of the proclamation of the new constitution for the State of Louisiana. This change of constitution is another concession to the many-headed monster, the *Mob*, and it appears to me (that like most of the boons which are wrung from the reluctant hands of authority) it is a most injudicious one. The governor of the State had formerly the patronage of all civil, as well as military appointments, the *old* constitution being to this effect: 'The governor shall be commander-in-chief of the army and navy of the State.' 'He shall nominate, and appoint, with the advice of the senate, the

judges, sheriffs, and all other officers.' The *new* constitution enacts that these offices shall now be elective, in other words, entirely in the hands of the people, and thus *their* power and influence, already immense, is becoming daily strengthened.

That the native Americans have not only a strong love of order, but also a great aptitude for self-government cannot be denied. This may, in a great measure, be attributed to the very superior education of the masses, but as the qualities I have mentioned are almost equally observable in the *few* who are uneducated, we must conclude that a remarkable acuteness, where their own interests are concerned, is the grand cause of the well-being of the community. The case is totally different as regards the immense numbers of emigrants who are constantly arriving, and even *here* the dangers resulting from placing power in ignorant and unworthy hands is becoming every day more apparent, and must eventually lead to great and important changes in this overgrown republic. At present, there is *room* for the power to work without much danger to the community, and as the wild beast in the open forests is less to be dreaded, than the same animal when pent up in unnatural confinement, and goaded to desperation by unsatisfied wants, so is the spread of the *people's power* as yet, nothing more in America than 'le *commencement* de la fin,' and excites but little

alarm among the reflecting and sober-minded men in the United States. In the meantime, every one we meet is loudly congratulating his neighbour on the attainment of their new constitution: it has given the people, as I said before, the power of electing their own judges, and if we may draw our conclusions from what we know of those in whom this power is vested, the choice is not likely to be a very eligible one. The salary of a judge is only a thousand pounds per annum, and as double this sum is easily realized by lawyers of even moderate talent by *private* practice, the *judges* are not likely to be men of a high order in the profession.

We had the pleasure, a short time before we left New Orleans, of meeting at dinner two Louisiana gentlemen, both of whom are possessed of great wealth and influence in the south, and who also seemed to feel most acutely the reproach cast on their country by the continued existence of slavery. Many interesting facts were brought forward by them, all tending to prove that the mass of the blacks are not so eager for liberty as to be willing to exert themselves by *labouring* for their own emancipation. In several cases, where the attempt has been made to allow them to work out their own freedom, the plan has met with signal failure, and this, almost always from the indifference of the blacks themselves to the object in view. There are, however, instances where a contrary result has

been produced, and one of these was particularly dwelt upon—namely, that of Mr. M'Donogh, a *builder* by profession, but withal one of the wealthiest men in New Orleans, and possessed of several plantations. Mr. M'Donogh seems to be a man remarkable for energy and talent, and the system he has pursued with regard to his slaves has succeeded admirably; but it must be remembered, that there are very few individuals who would be able to acquire over their slaves the same moral influence which he has attained; and I understand also that Mr. M'Donogh is very particular in his *choice* of slaves, and in the purchase of them shows much discrimination, preferring all those whose previous good character and general appearance lead him to expect a fair degree of intelligence and moral rectitude. The system he has pursued is so interesting, that I shall send you his own account of it as published in the newspapers here.*

Our last evening at New Orleans was spent at the Theatre, to witness the performance of the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, the character of *Falstaff* being admirably supported by the clever American comedian Hacket. Henry Clay joined us in our box, and also some of the friends who had so largely contributed to make our stay in America

* See Appendix.

agreeable. Mr. Clay's remarks on the English drama, and his critiques on the plays of Shakspeare were delivered with an elegance of diction, and an acuteness of criticism, which made them highly interesting.

Our passage to Louisville was taken on board the 'Sultana,' a new boat, and beautifully fitted up. But I am not going to dwell long upon the incidents of our voyage *up* the river, though this I must say, that it bore no comparison, in point of agreeableness, with our previous voyage *down* the Mississippi. One of the passengers was a maniac—a harmless one, I believe—but his madness had not taken a lively turn, and, as his aberration of mind was the consequence of severe losses from a shipwreck, on which occasion he had narrowly escaped with life, he made great resistance when his keeper and his servant brought him on board, and within sight of the element which he dreaded. Then we had in the saloon a deaf and dumb girl, who was in every respect a most painful object, and who was being conveyed to the excellent institution for persons similarly afflicted, at Boston; and there was besides, a *lady* from New Orleans, who was proceeding to Louisville in consequence of a letter which she informed us she had just received, and which announced to her the dangerous illness of her husband, who was staying in that city. It was not a cheerful party by any means, and the only

enlivenment to the gloom was a band of German musicians, who played their national airs beautifully, sometimes on deck, and in the evenings in the saloon.

The stewardess (always an important personage in every steam-boat) amused me very much by her extreme dignity and self-sufficiency; she was a dirty, untidy, middle-aged woman, very much like a London charwoman of an inferior description; and when I, on seeing her, (quite forgetting the strong prejudice which exists against all emigrants from the 'sister isle,') asked her if she was an Irishwoman, her indignation was great. 'Well,' she replied, 'I expect you might have seen that I was a *Welch lady!* my name's *Mrs. Davies,* and I have objections to being called stewardess by any body.' She and her husband had come out some years ago from the neighbourhood of Swansea, when the latter, after obtaining lucrative employment in the coal districts, died from drinking, and his *lady* became a stewardess.

There was a lady on board, the wife of a rich southern planter; she had her two children with her, and several black *servants,* and, according to the Welch stewardess, was 'dreadful proud.' 'Thinks herself too *good,* indeed, to speak to me, and after all, we're all equal, ar'n't we?'—appealing to me. My answer rather puzzled her: 'As long as *she* has five dollars to give you for being civil

and attentive, and as long as you are poor enough to be glad to earn them, I cannot allow that you and Mrs. —— are at all on an equality.' Whether I imposed on her by my sententiousness, or worked upon her avarice by my implied reward, I cannot say, but from that moment she was never familiar or intrusive, but was ready to do everything in her power for my comfort and accommodation. I have said a good deal about the 'Sultana' stewardess, because she belongs to a class often met with in America, and one which renders travelling in that country often very disagreeable to an Englishwoman; and, moreover, because I wish to do justice to the descendants of the ancient Britons, by remarking how greatly *they* distinguish themselves in their adopted country, by their stupid assertions of the equality of all men and women, and by their absurd boasts of being one and all ladies and gentlemen. '*Les egalités ne sont pas dans la nature,*' and if not in nature, they are surely not to be found in society, and least of all in a society so shifting as that in America, where the very precariousness of the tenure renders those in an elevated position the most tenacious of their rights. It is in vain that in this country we look for the *practice* of that popular but most fallacious theory of their original constitution, 'that all men are equal;' and, as to the absence of an aristocracy, that is equally impossible, for grades and degrees of conventional

*rank* (though, happily, not quite so distinctly marked) exist in the United States as decidedly as in any other country in the world, and, from what I have seen, I am convinced that an hereditary respect for an aristocracy, amounting almost to a wish to possess one, is an *English* quality which has never been eradicated from American character.

I took great interest in the 'planter's lady,' who, as well as her children, was very indolent, pretty, and well dressed. By the way, did I ever tell you that many American ladies both *chew* and ——! It was a good while before I discovered of what the *quid* was composed, which it was very evident reposed in a corner of their pretty mouths, but at last I ascertained that it was a species of nut, and in the south particularly the habit of chewing it is very general. I would forgive them for the practice, if it were not for the consequences. But I must return to the Creole lady: she asked me innumerable questions about England, but more especially as regarded the Queen — questions which I should imagine no one but her Majesty herself could be qualified to answer. I gave her one piece of information with which she seemed very much struck; it was on the subject of the great simplicity of dress habitual to the royal children. I verily believe that my astonished companion had previously figured to herself that the little creatures were

dragged about in ermine, velvet, and jewels. I was amused by her expressing her conviction that, were this 'interesting fact' generally promulgated in the United States, the extreme *finery* of the children here would be greatly modified. Do not you consider this remark as among the many proofs of the influence which the example of the highest ranks in England may, and does, have on manners and habits in America?

In return for *my* information, Mrs. —— talked to me about *her* land, and especially about *her* plantation. There was not much in what she said worthy of being recorded, but she *did* advocate strenuously the advantages of kind treatment as applied to slaves. 'They will do more work for me,' she said (as a proof of the goodness of her cause)—'they will do more for me when I give them a *slap*, than for all the overseer's punishments."

It was very curious to think of that little feminine, child-like hand *slapping* a great tall negro, and I could well understand the punishment not being a very unpleasant one; but what an unfeminine exercise of power!—and how bad and pernicious an effect may this arbitrary rule have upon the minds of both the owners and their children!

After one very sultry day, we had a tremendous storm of wind, rain, thunder, and lightning. The

uproar without was tremendous, the tempest rolled 'its awful burden on the wind,' and the blue and forked lightning darted against the unsheltered *skylight* of the saloon. I never witnessed a more fearful storm; the German musicians continued for awhile to pour forth their inspiriting strains, but soon the echoing thunder overpowered the music, and all was confusion; and then it was that the poor maniac in his cabin caught the excitement of the general fear, and howled and yelled in the extremity of his agony. But the scene of distress and tumult was not yet complete, for in the midst of it the vessel went ashore! It would be vain to attempt a description of what followed; the shock was great, and the alarm of all on board, particularly the ladies, painful to witness; and the dread of the Mississippi tragedies is so deeply rooted, that it was very long before anything like tranquillity was restored. We remained stationary till morning, and then, after an hour spent in repairing damages and getting the vessel off, we were on our way again. The next morning, while stopping at one of the landings, the *lady* on board the 'Sultana,' who had a sick husband awaiting her (as she thought) at Louisville, was greeted with the intelligence that the unfortunate gentleman was no more, but that his *body* was on board a steamer which was puffing alongside of ours, and was on its way to New Orleans, and the *disconsolate*

widow;—I can see her now, as she stood shading her eyes from the sun, and asking particulars of her friend, who had hailed her from the other steamer. She neither seemed surprised nor shocked, but after a little mental hesitation decided *not* to accompany the remains of her husband *down* the river, but to pursue her voyage to Louisville, as she had originally intended. I never saw so composed a widow; she never absented herself from any of the meals, and ate and drank quite comfortably, a little serious sometimes, but nothing more. People have no *time* to think of death in America.

We had no more adventures till we reached Louisville, at which place we stopped, and the next morning departed, in another steamer, for Cincinnati. After leaving Louisville, I found myself seated at dinner next to a very agreeable and gentlemanlike person, one who possessed *l'usage du monde*, as well as a gift which I value highly —namely, that of the 'touch and go' of conversation; in other words, he never *hammered* at one subject, or wore an argument or discussion threadbare. I soon felt a great curiosity to know who my neighbour was, and the more so from the tone of his voice being quite familiar to my ear; still I could not affix to him a profession, name, or station, and was wondering and pondering greatly on the subject when the object of my cogitations suddenly exclaimed, on seeing me struggling in vain to dis-

member a tough and ancient bird, which had made its appearance on the table, 'Another fault in the semblance of a fowl! think on't Jove!—a fowl fault!' After all, it was Falstaff, and none else, who, having pulled off his buck's head, had taken passage in the Cincinnati steam-boat. Impossible to help laughing at the transmogrification! The 'mountain of flesh' rolling about the boards, the best impersonification of the fat old *roué* that ever was seen, was turned into a mild, gentlemanlike, slender individual, as unlike the lover of the merry Mistress Ford as it was possible to be. He was both amused by our surprise and gratified by our expressions of admiration at his performance, and in return he entertained us till a late hour of the night with his theatrical reminiscences, and his recitations of different passages of Shakspeare, of whose genius he is a most enthusiastic admirer. He was travelling north on his way to Europe, having some professional engagements to fulfil at Philadelphia and new York, after which he intended to take his final leave of theatrical life.

We arrived in safety at Cincinnati, where we passed the night, but were early *en route* the following morning. We had invited Mr. Hacket to be our companion in our 'exclusive extra' across the Alleghany Mountains, but he was, unfortunately a *minute* too late for the steam-boat, on which *we* were already embarked for Brownsville,

and we were obliged in consequence to leave him, lamenting on the shore, and parted from Falstaff's coat and stuffings, which were all on board, and far enough removed from the reach of their owner. We were very sorry for the fate of our quondam fellow-passenger, and for the inconvenience which he would be certain to suffer from the absence of his theatrical habiliments; the captain could not return or wait for him, from the danger of his high-pressure engine blowing us into the air—so away we went, regretting very much, for our own sake, the loss of the actor's pleasant companionship.

There was a great deal of snow on the mountains, and sledges were, on the high grounds, still in use—the roads were in a worse state than ever, and the difficulty at some of the stages of obtaining horses very great. *Members* were flocking up to congress, and the whole world seemed with one accord to be moving north, so that we were often kept waiting a long time for horses, and all the inns on the road were filled to overflowing. The trees in the valleys were beginning to put on their spring livery of green, and at the foot of every maple-tree was placed a little wooden trough, into which the sap (trickling from a small perforation made in the tree, about a foot from the ground) descended slowly, but constantly.

We found our hotel at Baltimore full of members of congress, with and without their families,

and were glad to hasten on to Washington, where we have established ourselves in Gadsby's Hotel, already familiar to us, and not easily to be forgotten by reason of the dust, sun, noise, and mosquitoes, which do here abound. And now to conclude. I shall have much to say of public matters in my next, and a mail is going to England.

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## LETTER XXXIX.

THE 'CAPITOL'—DESCRIPTION OF THE SENATE CHAMBER AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—JOHN QUINCY ADAMS — PRESIDENT POLK — AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS—EVENING PARTY AT THE 'WHITE HOUSE.'

*Washington—April.*

WE have now been a week at Washington—the 'city of magnificent distances,' as it is called. Why, we have not, as yet, been able to guess, but I suspect the name is given in ridicule, as Washington is certainly not a popular city with the Americans. Our hotel is situated very near the railway terminus, and in the centre of the fashionable promenade, y'clept Pennsylvania avenue, which avenue extends from the 'Capitol' to the *White House*, as the abode of the President of the country is modestly called. These two buildings stand on rising ground, at either end of the avenue, on one side of which is the swamp, extending down to the Potomac river, and on the other, the straggling and unfinished streets of the town.

In Washington, we almost find ourselves for-

getting that we are in store-keeping America; the conversation turns more upon politics than on trade; a somewhat aristocratic air is breathed over the city, and the fact that the representatives of European royalty are here assembled, brings back to us thoughts and ideas connected with our own distant hemisphere. All these causes contribute to render Washington more agreeable to an English person for a short residence, than any other city in the Union.

The 'Capitol' is the principal place of resort for every idler, (and there are many idlers at Washington,) and certainly within its walls no one can be at a loss for amusement. You enter it (having first ascended a somewhat steep *hill*) by a noble flight of stone steps, leading you into the Rotunda, which occupies the centre of the building. This Rotunda is about a hundred feet in diameter, and as many in height, being surmounted by a cupola, to the summit of which you may ascend by a staircase, and when there enjoy a magnificent view of the city, river, and surrounding country. On the walls of the Rotunda are several large pictures, sufficiently well executed, and also some alto-relievos, all of which represent incidents connected with the American Revolution.

The Capitol also contains the Hall of Representatives, the Senate Chamber, a fine library, and various committee-rooms, offices, &c. &c. The

Hall of Representatives, and the Senate Chamber, are both worthy of admiration, being of a semi-circular form, and ornamented with columns, which support the gallery appropriated to the use of strangers. Let us first enter the *lower* house, and convince ourselves by ocular observation of the appropriateness of its name. Here we see about two hundred and fifty individuals collected, and, as we look down upon them from the height, they present a curious spectacle.

There is a great sameness both in the features and countenances of the Americans, and a *sharp* look is common to all, moreover, though a *few* were remarkably *smart*, (I use the word here as applied to their costume, and not to their mental qualifications,) the majority were clothed in the inevitable black silk waistcoat, which I have everywhere noticed, and put their thumbs (when they were not whittling) into the pockets of the said waistcoats just as usual. The noise is generally so overpowering that it is hardly possible to hear a word that proceeds from the mouth, or more properly speaking the *nose*, of the orator, who flatters himself that he is addressing the House. It not unfrequently happens that two or three members rise at once, and in their zeal to hear themselves talk, almost come to blows for the possession of the floor, whilst the noises and cries made by 'honourable members,' are wonderful in the ex-

treme. From one part of the House, the crowing of a dozen cocks enlivens the assembly, while in another the loud braying of as many donkeys, or the 'gobble, gobble,' of some angry turkey-cocks, is imitated to the life by the Representatives of this great People. A *paper-war* is sometimes carried on by means of pellets hastily formed of official reports, or the newspapers of the day, and thrown dexterously at the heads of drowsy, or thoughtful members, and as each of them is provided with a thing—called, I believe, a *spittoon*—and also with a whittling-knife, there is, on the whole, no dearth of employment.

In the midst of all this din, noise, confusion, and vulgarity, is seen the patriarchal figure of the great statesman, John Quincy Adams. Here, surrounded by the sounding brass and tinkling cymbals of 'Young America,' the light of genius, and of pure, unsullied patriotism 'burns on as in a sanctuary,' and though the oil which feeds the glimmering lamp is low, and the last flickering rays of light are streaming upwards, there is still a fire in the old man's eye, and a power in his voice, which is never raised without commanding silence and attention.*

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* Since writing the above, this distinguished statesman has 'paid the debt of nature.' He died suddenly in his place in the representative chamber, at a very advanced age, and universally regretted.

The Hall is covered with a rich carpet, *once* new and clean, and the members are accommodated with comfortable arm-chairs; and, in addition to these luxuries, they each receive the sum of eight dollars a day for their services, besides having their travelling expenses paid to and from the seat of government. After the description I have given you, you will at once perceive that it is neither the most talented, the most respectable, nor the wealthiest citizens, who find their way into the Lower House. The truth is, that few of those belonging to the above classes are willing to submit to the necessary degradation entailed upon the candidates for such questionable honours, and moreover it would seem that the people themselves prefer Representatives whose habits and sentiments are somewhat on an equality with their own.

The style of eloquence which prevails in the Lower House may easily be imagined. Each member represents thirty thousand of his fellow-citizens, and considers himself *bound* to make a certain number of speeches, both in honour of his constituency, and also as a means of insuring his own re-election. The speeches of any individual member display generally a rare indifference to the matter in debate, and also to the *party* to which the orator may happen to belong, for he considers that he has fulfilled his duty when he has spoken

one hour about his own district, and enabled his constituents to read his speech in the newspapers.

It is recorded of a very long-winded gentleman, who had been boring the House till the patience of every member was exhausted, that, when a friend gently hinted to him that his hour had expired, and moreover that he was not speaking on the subject before the House—he replied, with great ingenuousness, 'Well, I guess I ar'nt addressing the House at all—I am talking to *Bunkum*, I am.' Now, *Bunkum* was the name of the district of which this single-minded gentleman was the representative, and the expression of 'talking Bunkum' has now passed into a common saying in the United States.

After all, it would be very unfair for a stranger to draw his conclusions, or form his opinions of the American people from the characters or demeanour of their representatives as they appear in the Hall of Representatives. It is a disagreeable reflection to *us* that the worst amongst them invariably owe their election either to our own countrymen, or to the German emigrants who flock to this country. The votes of these people, most of whom are sprung from the very dregs of society, are given to the candidate who professes the greatest degree of inveterate animosity to Europe and its institutions, and the result of the American elec-

tions, and the return of the low-minded and prejudiced Locofocos by our own countrymen should be alone sufficient to convince every Englishman of the unfitness of our own people for the privilege of universal suffrage. But enough of the noisy representatives of the 'free citizens of the United States.' To parties interested in the reputation of this assembly, it must be a satisfaction to feel that very little of what is said is audible in the gallery—or, indeed, any where else, for the hall is so badly constructed for hearing that even were it possible for silence to be obtained, it would be difficult to arrive at the sense (supposing there *were* any) of any speech therein delivered.

Let us now (having quitted the Hall of Representatives, which is situated in the *south wing* of the Capitol) descend again into the Rotunda, and make our way to the senate chamber, which occupies the *north wing* of the building. The chamber itself (except in point of size) differs but little from the Hall of Representatives; but the contrast afforded by the members of the two houses is striking in the extreme. The senate consists at present of fifty-four members, two being sent from each State. It cannot be said that they are elected by universal suffrage, for they are chosen by the legislature of the different States for the term of six years, one-third of them being elected biennially.

Hence their superiority over the representatives, who are directly the result of universal suffrage.

Many of the most remarkable and distinguished men in America are to be found in the Senate—its members generally are every way qualified to represent the great country to which they belong, and to uphold the name of America among the nations of the earth. The debates are conducted with a degree of dignity and decorum not to be surpassed by any legislative assembly in Europe; the style of oratory is, on the whole, very respectable, and the speakers generally seem to keep in view the interests of their country, without being led away by party feeling

The debates, to which we are now daily listening, are carried on in a moment of the greatest possible excitement, the Oregon question being on the eve of settlement, and *that* settlement involving the mighty question of peace or war with the mother country. Though the subject is one which causes an unusual violence of feeling among all parties in the United States, it is gratifying to perceive in how trifling a degree the debates in the senate are affected by the popular excitement With *one* exception, nothing can be more *gentlemanlike* than the tone in which the War Question is discussed, and I need hardly add that the member thus excepted represents a State, the majority of whose

population is composed of foreigners. *His* was the only case in which I heard either unfair or discourteous language applied to England, or her representative spoken of in other terms than those of the highest respect and admiration.

The members of the Senate are for the most part intellectual and striking-looking men, and their appearance is altogether that of gentlemen. I should not venture to say so much of the Lower House, and nowhere can one feel more forcibly the difference produced by the costume of gentlemen fifty years ago, as compared with that worn in the present day. In looking at the representatives of the American people, one can scarcely believe they are the descendants of those respectable and serious-looking worthies who signed the declaration of independence, and whose portraits now ornament the walls of the Capitol. Surely there is something dignified in a *pigtail*, and the powdered head and dressy costume of the last century certainly produce a very pleasing effect when contrasted with the neglected locks and shabby appearance of the majority of the present House of Representatives.

The President of the Republic has, at this moment, a most difficult card to play, for, having been brought in by the Locofocos, he is obliged to *appear* hostile to England, even at the risk of sacrificing thereby the peace and prosperity of his

country. The standard of principle, by which American statesmen are governed, has of late years been sadly lowered, and I have heard it affirmed, by many unprejudiced Americans, that the policy of their Presidents is almost invariably one of expediency, for, by *humouring* the majority, they take the most effectual means of insuring their own re-election. But the difficulty under which Mr. Polk at present labours, is that of discovering to which side the wishes of the majority actually lean. The newspapers here (and their name is Legion) are, notwithstanding their numbers, quite inefficient as a means of judging the state of public opinion; generally speaking, the opinions which they adopt are those most likely to induce a copious sale of the paper itself, and thus all idea of maintaining any degree of political consistency is at once abandoned.

As a proof of this assertion, I will instance an anecdote, which, whether true or not, serves to show the low opinion which the people themselves entertain of their newspapers. A gentleman informed me, that while travelling a few weeks ago in the North, he refused to purchase a well-known New York paper, on the grounds that it was 'Locofoco.' 'Not at all,' replied the vender: 'this is Wednesday, so it's Whig to-day.' There are a few striking exceptions to the rule, but on the whole, the low character of the public press is

so generally recognised by the people, that it cannot be said to have much influence as a political engine. I am of opinion, that the leading articles in our first English papers exercise a greater influence over the opinions of the people in the United States than the whole of their own put together. It is curious to observe how anxiously they are looked for with the arrival of each European mail, and with what rapidity they are republished in every American newspaper throughout the United States, even to the most remote settlements in the Far-West.

The dinners at our hotel do not pass off very agreeably; there are a great many negro waiters rushing about, with their sleeves tucked up, and jostling one another in their eagerness to supply the wants of every one of the guests at the same time; while a tone of party spirit, which, if it does not actually degenerate into quarrelling and rudeness, hovers very near their confines, keeps one in a constant state of agitation. The subject of slavery is frequently discussed, and the disputes thereon are often frightfully warm. Among other remarks, I heard a southern gentleman affirm, that the Northern States are, in reality, even more opposed to the abolition of slavery than the South, and he related the following occurrence to strengthen his argument.

About two years ago, the petition of a free

negro, who was about to be sold for the payment of gaol fees, was before Congress, on which occasion several members from the North declared, that in the case of a proposition to abolish slavery in the South, nine hundred and ninety-nine men in the North out of a thousand, would be against the measure, as its success would have the effect of 'flooding *them* with a black population.' I have ascertained that this is perfectly true, and it confirms the opinion I had already formed in regard to the *sincerity* of the Northern advocates for abolition.

As we were unwilling to leave Washington without paying a visit to the *White House*, Mr. Pakenham kindly accompanied us there, on one of the evenings appropriated to general reception, and presented us to the President and to Mrs. Polk. A great deal has been said by travellers in America, in disparagement of the society one is likely to meet with on these occasions, and I have heard it remarked, and also seen it promulgated in books, that the lowest dregs of the people enter the presence of the President, without ceremony, keep on their hats in the reception rooms, smoke, &c. without any respect for persons, and, in short, conduct themselves in a most unseemly manner. All this *may* have been the case formerly, and it may also be said, that my observations on the occasion of one solitary visit, give me no right to

speak confidently of the nature of these *re-unions* generally. Nevertheless, I can hardly conceive, judging from the strictness of etiquette which *I* saw observed at the *White House*, that these assemblages can ever degenerate into the species of *bear garden* which many writers have described them to be.

The President himself is an insignificant, quiet-mannered individual, whose intention evidently is to be remarkably courteous and polite; he seems also to have had sufficient tact to discover, that, not being likely, either from his previous habits or his personal appearance, to produce an *effect* in society, his most prudent course is 'to wear a black coat and hold his tongue.' The *presidentess* is not only a very pleasing person in manner, but (if we may believe the many tongues of common report) is possessed of no inconsiderable degree of talent. The dress, both of ladies and gentlemen, differed in no respect from that which one is accustomed to see in evening society, both in London and Paris, the display of diamonds was very respectable, and setting aside the dulness—of which there was rather more than an average quantity—there was very little either to provoke ridicule, or justify invidious remarks. To-morrow, we leave for Boston, so I shall close this letter here.

# LETTER XL.

DEPARTURE FROM WASHINGTON — AUTHOR OF 'HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS' — INSTITUTION OF THE BLIND AT BOSTON—AN ICEBERG—A WRECK DISCOVERED — PLEASANT VOYAGE—ARRIVAL AT LIVERPOOL.

*'Hibernia' at Sea—April.*

ONCE more upon the salt waters! Once more careering over the waters, and steering towards our homes! our good ship 'bounds beneath us'—with a thousand horse power, and almost every heart on board of her seems light with joyful expectation. Two thousand miles a-head — ay, and more—also are the green hills of Ireland, and the white cliffs of our own land, but every day diminishes the distance, and the strong westerly wind helps us hopefully on to the Old World once more.

The day following that on which I despatched my last letter to you from Washington, we bade adieu to that city, and commenced our route towards the north. Our journey, which occupied three days, was an uneventful one, but I must not forget to tell you that we were not without com-

panions—agreeable ones, too—on the road, having had the good fortune to be joined by the author of 'Highways and Byways,' M. Calderon de la Barca, the Spanish minister, an English ex-attaché, and one or two other homeward-bound, and far from unintelligent 'Britishers.'

We had two days to spare at Boston, previous to the departure of the steamer for England, and one of these we devoted to the 'inspection' of the excellent institution for the blind. We spent a long day among them, admiring the wonderful patience and skill with which their burthen is rendered bearable to them, and the extraordinary intelligence which many of them display. The details respecting this institution have been so often and so ably given, that you must, I am sure, be familiar with them—therefore, I shall content myself with telling you, that we saw and *conversed* both with Laura Bridgman, and Oliver Caswell, the two cases which excite so much interest and curiosity.

They were both born deprived alike of *hearing*, *sight*, and *speech*, and yet *now*, they are not only rational and thinking creatures, but are well informed in a degree infinitely superior to that of most of their condition in life, and are capable of reading, and otherwise employing themselves in a manner both amusing and profitable. Verily, these good Samaritans are appointed to make the

dumb to speak, the blind to see, and the benighted and ignorant to understand, and to 'lay up knowledge.'

Our last evening was passed in the most agreeable society of Boston, and yet there was a shade of melancholy on our spirits, for we felt we were leaving (perhaps for ever) many kind and hospitable friends. After all, though there is much to censure in the land we have left, a person must indeed be strongly prejudiced, who does not find infinitely more to admire than to condemn.

America is still a very young republic, for, great and unexampled as is the progress she has made during her seventy years of independent existence —what are seventy years in the long histories of nations? — every day (as we have had ample opportunities of observing) she makes a step— I might well call it a *stride* in her advancement— and though at present she is certainly not (except in the matter of *size*) '*the greatest* country on airth,' I have no doubt that the time will come when she may in every respect, *and without boasting*, lay claim to that proud distinction. In commerce, she is already no despicable rival of the first nation in the world—civilization and refinement, with the arts and sciences in their train, are making sure, though perhaps not rapid, progress amongst her citizens, and every revolving year seems to add to her prosperity. Let Europe

and Europeans (who *are* jealous of America, as America of *them*) deny it as they may, there is among England's descendants in the west, *l'étoffe des grands hommes*, they are now toiling up the ascent which the Old World has trod before them —the latter is arrived at the apex; what next will follow, who can say? If the race in this case 'be to the swift,' and the 'battle to the strong,' America will reach the summit sooner than those that have gone before her; and when there, let us pray that *England be found there also.*

There are more Americans than English on board, for it is the season when the former set off on the *grand tour*, to enjoy, as a stout gentleman here calls it, 'a run in Italy.' There is among the passengers a somewhat gloomy-looking individual in a gray paletot, who is said to have left his native land for a *little change*, having for the moment depressed his spirits by putting an end to the existence of his wife and friend, in a fit of jealous rage. He eats well, however, and his friends may have the satisfaction of hoping to see him 'all right' again soon.

We had but two *events*, if such they might be called, to break the tedium of the voyage—one was the sight of a large iceberg, glittering like polished silver under the rays of the sun, and the other, was the falling in with a wreck. Every one rushed on deck when the latter was signalled, and

every eye was fixed on the vessel, which lay half hid, and washed over by the waves, waterlogged, and with a few tattered rags of sails, flapping from the small masts which still remained standing. There was rather a heavy sea on, so the captain gave orders, as it was blowing fresh at the time, to have all ready to lower the life-boat, in case there should be any survivors on the wreck to whom we might render assistance. We went quite close to the little vessel, near enough to convince ourselves whether or not there were any starving or drowning creatures on board; but we strained our eyes in vain, she was devoid of any human occupant, and after making out from the letters on her stern that she was from Savannah, a timber ship, (which prevented her sinking,) we went on our way. What had been the fate of the crew which had manned her, we had of course no means of ascertaining, whether the 'winds and waves had hurled them thence,' and 'without their will had carried them away,' or whether

> 'Famine, despair, and cold, and thirst had done
> Their work on them by turns, and thinn'd them to
> Such things, a mother had not known her son
> Amidst the skeletons of that gaunt crew.'

But we left the wreck to float on in her desolation, we knew not whither; and, perhaps, (guided by unseen currents, and the capricious winds of Heaven,)

she may, rudderless and bereft though she be, find a haven at last.

But now, after a short and prosperous passage, Liverpool is *said* to be in sight—nothing, however, can be less veracious than the assertion. All that *is* in sight is a thick veil composed of a mixture of cold fog, small rain, sea-mist, and coal smoke; the Americans look very blank, especially the ladies, who have donned their favourite finery to produce an effect on landing; and I must confess, that I feel thoroughly ashamed of my climate. 'None of your confounded blue skies here,' quoted the ex-attaché, as he stood, shivering and miserable, at the ship's side, watching the dragging up of the mail-bags from the strongholds of the vessel.

It is only *now* that I feel I am really saying 'farewell' to America. These splendid vessels are a sort of *neutral ground*, and while on board them, one can almost still fancy oneself in *Yankee land;* now, however, all this delusion is over, but in spite of fogs, of rain, and smoke, I feel that it is England still, and I am glad to be at home again!

# APPENDIX.

# APPENDIX.

## LETTER OF JOHN M'DONOGH ON AFRICAN COLONIZATION.

MESSRS. EDITORS:—

IN a piece wrote by me in June last, on the subject of sending away some of my black people to Africa, and published in your paper of the 24th of that month, I observed, 'that the act of sending those people away is, in my case, one of simple honesty alone.' I lay no claim, nor am I entitled to any credit or praise, on the score of generosity. My meaning in the above assertion I will explain, Messrs. Editors, through your paper, (should my leisure admit of it,) at some future time, and the rather, as it may perhaps be of service to the slaveholders of the State, to know how one, who has had much to do for forty years past with the treatment of slaves, has succeeded in it. When they find from my experience, that they can send their whole gangs to Africa every fifteen years, without the cost of a dollar to themselves, what master will refuse to do so much good, when it will cost him nothing in the doing it, and afford him at the same time such high gratification, in knowing that he has contributed to the making many human beings happy. For my experience will show that, with a proper treatment of slaves, the gain from their extra labour, (that is, labour over and above that

which slaves in general yield their owners,) in the course of that time—say fifteen years, will enable their masters to send them out, and purchase in Virginia and Maryland, (with the gain made from said extra labour,) a gang of equal number to replace them. In addition to which, what an amount of satisfaction (I would ask every humane master) would he not enjoy, in knowing that he was surrounded by friends, on whose faithfulness and fidelity he and his family could rely, under every possible contingency? In fulfilment, then, of said promise, I now undertake to explain the observation I then made, 'That the act of sending those people away is, in my case, one of simple honesty alone;' and to set forth and show the mode I adopted and pursued, (after much experience and reflection on the subject,) for many years in their treatment and its results. Before commencing, however, this long detail of treatment and its attending circumstances, I will premise to those who feel an interest in the subject, and will take the trouble to read this recital, that it is one of egotism throughout; it tells of what the master said and what he did, from the beginning of the chapter to its end,—in this, therefore, I will be excused: it is what I promised, and there is but one way of telling the story to make it intelligible. To proceed then, and give you the plan which I laid down for myself, and have pursued for the last seventeen years, for the conduct and management of those I held in bondage, I have to observe, that having been at all times opposed to labouring on the Sabbath day, (except in cases of actual necessity,) one of my rules for their walk and guidance in life always was, that they should never work on that holy day, prohibited as we were from so doing by the divine law. A long expe-

rience, however, convinced me of the utter impossibility of carrying it out in practice by men held in bondage, and obliged to labour for their master six full days in the week; and I saw on reflection, much to extenuate, as to them, the offence against my rule. They were men, and stood in need of many little necessaries of life not supplied by their master, and which they could obtain in no other way but by labour on that day. I therefore had often to shut my eyes and not see the offence, though I knew my instructions on that head were not obeyed; and in consequence, after long and fruitless exertions (continued for many years) to obtain obedience to that injunction, I determined to allow them the one-half of Saturday (say Saturday from mid-day until night) to labour for themselves, under a penalty well understood by them, of punishment for disobedience, (if they violated thereafter the Sabbath day,) and sale to some other master. From this time, which was about the year 1822, the Sabbath day was kept holy—church was regularly attended, forenoon and afternoon, (for I had a church built expressly for them on my own plantation, in which a pious neighbour occasionally preached on the Sabbath day, assisted by two or three of my own male slaves, who understood, preached, and expounded the scriptures passably well, and at times I read them a sermon myself,) and I perceived in a very short time a remarkable change in their manners, conduct, and life, in every respect for the better. We proceeded on in this way, happy, prosperous, and blessed in every respect by the Most High, for about three years, or until 1825, when, seeing the amount of money which they gained by their Saturday afternoon's labour, (they in general laboured for myself, though they were permitted to

labour for whom they pleased, giving the preference to their master, even at a less rate of wages, on whose honesty they could depend for payment, for they were paid as regularly as the night came,) in the long days of summer I paid the men for their Saturday afternoon's labour at the rate of 62½ cents per day, the women at the rate of 50 cents per day; in the short days of winter I paid the men at the rate of 50 cents per day, the women 37½ cents per day, and the large boys and girls in proportion—I was led to calculate in what length of time, by labour, economy, and perseverance in well-doing, they would be enabled to purchase the remaining 5½ days of the week, (seeing that they had a capital of their own in the one half of one day in each week, to begin to trade on,) and by that means obtain freedom for themselves and children. In this estimate and calculation I soon satisfied myself that it could be effected in the space of 14 or 15 years, at the furthest. The next consideration with me was, 'Is it my interest to assist them in its accomplishment, or can I, by any means I can devise, make it to become my interest to assist them in obtaining their freedom in that time?' This also required reflection and calculation. I went at it, and in a very short time, from the clearest of all deductions, was convinced—satisfied that it could be done, and that it was in every point of view in which the subject could be looked at and considered, my interest, (and more especially if I took into view the considerations of satisfaction, pleasantness, and happiness, which I should enjoy in tending to the happiness of others,) to do it. When thus satisfied that the project was good in itself, and worthy of trial for various solid reasons, I determined to lay my plan before them, and

explain it in all its bearings, (that is, before some ten or twelve men and women, those men and women in whom the others had confidence, and looked up to at all times and in all situations, for their superior talents, capacity, and virtues, for counsel and advice—for it is the same with the black as white man: assemble together, for the first time, twenty or fifty white men, a company of soldiers for instance, and within forty-eight hours after being brought together, [though strangers to each other,] the great majority will place their eyes on certain men among them, for their wisdom, courage, and virtue, on whom they, unknowingly to one another, determine to look up to as leaders or chiefs, to conduct, counsel, and advise them.) This I did when church service was over, on a Sabbath afternoon, observing to them, that, having their welfare and happiness in this world, as well as the next, much at heart, I was in consequence greatly desirous of serving them and their children; that, in furtherance of those views and desires, I had a plan to propose to them, which, if you have confidence in the truth and honesty of your master, of his friendship for you, and sincere desire to serve you and do you good, (for except you have that confidence in him, and mutual regard, friendship, and esteem for him, there would be no use in saying a word more about it, or in attempting to carry out the plan I have to propose to you, for I notify you before hand, it cannot succeed if the most unlimited confidence and esteem does not mutually exist, as well on the side of the master as of the servant,) and will from this day and hour change the whole course of your lives, (though I acknowledge in justice to you all, that I have no particular charge to make against the morality of your past lives,) and walk

in the love and fear of God—if you and your children will be faithful, honest, true, sober, economical, industrious, (not eye servants,) labouring day and night, considering the affairs and interest of your master, as the affairs, concerns, and interest of each and every one of you individually, and all this with a fixed determination to persevere in well-doing to the end, under every temptation that may assail you, and over every obstacle that may fall in your way, and will in everything be ruled, directed, and guided by me, I will then in that case, and under this full agreement and understanding between us, undertake so to manage your affairs, (by becoming your banker—the keeper of your gains and of your accounts,) as to insure your freedom, and that of your children, with the blessing of the Most High, (viz., your freedom in Liberia, in the land of your fathers, a great and glorious land; for let it be understood between us, it is your freedom in Liberia that I contract for, for I would never consent to give freedom to a single individual among you, to remain on the same soil with the white man,) within the term, (according to my estimate and calculation,) of fifteen or sixteen years, or thereabouts, say a year or two sooner, or a year or two later. This will be effected in conformity to my plan and estimate, in the following manner, viz., the one-half of Saturday being already your own, (in consequence of my agreement with you that no labour shall be done on the Sabbath day,) your first object will be to gain a sufficient sum of money to purchase the other half of Saturday, which is the one-eleventh part of the time you have to labour for your master, and of consequence, the one-eleventh part of the value your master has put upon you, and which you have to pay him for

your freedom, (this I notify you will be the most difficult part of your undertaking, and take the longest time to accomplish,) and is to be effected by labouring for me on Saturday afternoons, and leaving the amount of your labour in my hands, to be husbanded up for you. By foregoing everything yourselves, and drawing as little money as possible out of my hands, I calculate you will be able to accomplish it in about seven years; that once accomplished, and one whole day out of six your own, you will go on more easy and rapidly; indeed, that once effected, your success is certain; proceeding, then, on in your good work, you will be enabled easily, by your earnings on one entire day in each week, to effect the purchase of another day of your time in about four years. Now, master and owner of two days in each week, you will be able in two years more to purchase another day, so that three days, or the one-half of your time, will be your own; in one and a half years more, you will be able to purchase another day, making four days your own; in one year more, another, or the fifth day; and in six months, the last day, or the whole of your time will be your own. Your gains in less than another year will suffice to free (added to what the youths will have gained in the meantime) your children, and all will be accomplished!

In the foregoing estimate, I calculate that you will draw from me occasionally some small sums of money to furnish little necessaries you may need; but you will remember when one draws, the whole of you, each individual, must draw at the same time; the men an equal sum each; the women, the three-fourth part each of the sum drawn by the men. That you shall be estimated at fair and reasonable prices—say the men at

six hundred dollars each, the women at four hundred and fifty, and the boys, girls, and children in proportion. An account shall be opened at once on my books, and your valuations charged, without taking into account the increased value of the youth and children as they advance in age, and no child to be charged who shall be born after the commencement of this agreement; this in some measure as a counterbalance to an interest account, as none will be calculated or allowed you on the amount of your gains in my hands—that such men and women as have no children of their own, when they have worked out their prices, shall be held and obliged to work and assist in paying for the children of the others, so that the whole company shall go on the same day on board ship, and sail for your fatherland. That I expect, and shall insist on, a strict performance of your moral and religious duties in every respect, and church regularly attended by you and your children, forenoon and afternoon, on the Sabbath day. That—as I would not agree to keep an immoral or bad servant, or one who I would be obliged to have chastised for offences, on any consideration—should any of you, therefore, commit crimes at any time, whilst serving under this agreement, he or she shall be immediately put up at public sale (their offences declared or made known) and sold; and whatever money they have earned under this agreement shall go for the benefit of the others in general. (I have now to state, that during the whole of the period in which they were labouring for themselves under this agreement, I had to sell, for conduct I could not pardon, but two individuals; this should not be considered strange, looking at the situation in which they were placed, in the vicinage of such a city as New Orleans,

and oftentimes within its bosom for months together.) I have now to observe that their surprise and astonishment at such a proposal, (coming, as it did, from a master who had unlimited legal power over them and their time,) expecting nothing of the kind, may be easily conceived; they gave their consent with tears of joy—declared the confidence they entertained of my truth, honesty, and pure intentions to do them and their children good, and their willingness and determination to be guided in all things by me, and to make my will and my interest (after the Divine will) the study and rule of their lives. On separating, I told them to communicate my plan and proposals to their adult fellow-servants, male and female, and to say to them that none were bound or forced to come into the arrangement who had any objection to it; that such as did not wish to accept of it should go on under the old regulations, and I requested one and all of them to consult together through the week, and to give me their final answer and determination on the next Sabbath in church, when it should be confirmed or abandoned, at the same time charging them, as they valued my affection, to keep what I said to them (desirous as I was to avoid, by so doing, the making the slaves of other plantations unhappy or discontented) in their own bosoms, and never to disclose it until after they should have left the country for Africa, to a living being on earth. (Be content, said I to them, with the good you are about to receive, and keep the knowledge of it to yourselves.) This they promised me they would do, and which, I believe, they religiously did. On the next Sabbath day I met them in church, and was told that they had informed all their fellow-servants of my views and intentions towards them—that they had well

reflected through the past week on all that I had said to them—that they were at a loss for words to express their love and gratitude to me for what I had done, and was now desirous of doing for them and their children—that they had always looked on me in the light of a father deeply interested in their welfare—that I was the only true friend they had on earth—that they accepted one and all of the proposals I had made them, and were determined, with the assistance of the Most High, to a change of life, to live and walk in the Divine law; to be guided in all their worldly conduct implicitly by my directions and counsel; and to fulfil, with all the energy of their souls, the agreement they had entered into and taken with me. On this, I observed to them, that it was all well; that the contract and agreement was now concluded; that we would on both sides, master and servants, begin from that day to execute and carry it out; that I would put down in writing all I had said to them, that no mistake might arise thereafter of what I had said, or what I had not said. That to put you, however, more fully in possession of my scheme for your benefit, to give you a more perfect understanding of it, (of the contract which you are about to take on yourselves,) so that in the carrying of it out complete success may attend it on both sides—that neither party, master nor slave, may be disappointed, I will inform you what I expect to realize, and how it is to be effected. *My object is your freedom and happiness in Liberia, without loss or the cost of a cent to myself from sending you away, and conferring that boon (as the humble instrument of the Most High) on you and your children.* How, you will naturally inquire, is that to be done? I will tell you how it is to be done. There is but

one way, one mode to effect it, that I can see or devise, and that is by greater assiduity and exertions in the slave to his labour during the usual hours of day labour, and especially by extra hours of labour before day in the morning, and after night in the evening. One hour after night in the evening, and one hour before day in the morning, would be two hours extra in twenty-four hours, which would be the one-sixth part more of time devoted to labour than is generally demanded of the slave, which is equivalent to two years and a half additional labour in fifteen years. Two hours extra labour before day in the morning, and two hours after night in the evening, would be four hours extra in every twenty-four hours or day, which would be the one-third part more of time devoted to labour than is generally demanded of the slave, which is equivalent to five entire years of additional and extra labour in fifteen years. Without a scheme of this kind, said I to them, by means of which you can effect a greater amount of labour in a given time that you otherwise could do, I could not afford to send you out; for, without it, my sending you to Liberia would, (under the agreement, and in the mode I propose, of permitting you to gain your freedom by labouring during the hours and time which belongs to your master, and by that means paying him for your time,) though it appear specious in itself, be, in reality the making you a present of your time—the making you and your children a gift of your freedom; for as the whole of your time belongs to your master, (the Sabbath day excepted, on which holy day neither master nor servant is permitted to labour,) if he was to permit you to work on a certain part of it to make money to purchase your freedom, he would, in reality, in so doing

make you a gift of your freedom, which few masters could afford to do. But in the mode which I propose and now explain to you, that you may fully comprehend and understand it, (which is the contract and agreement you are now making, and taking on yourselves to perform,) your master will not make you a présent of an hour of your time, and you, in reality, will have gained and placed in his hands, previous to the going out free, a sum of money arising from your extra labour fully sufficient to enable him to purchase an equal number of people with yourselves, man for man, woman for woman, and youth and child for youth and child, to take place in the work of his farm, so that his work and revenue shall not be stopped or arrested for an hour, and to set you out with all things necessary in your new life and new undertaking, (should he think proper so to do,) much to your own advantage, respectability, and happiness, and to his own satisfaction and honour; for a humane master will delight in tending to the happiness of those whom the Most High has placed under his care, and who have served him truly and faithfully. The only difference and change, then, which this arrangement will make in the affairs of your master, will be that he will have the same number of new servants in the place and stead of his old and faithful ones, to do his work. You therefore now sée, and fully understand, what my scheme for your benefit is. It is feasible, and can be easily accomplished, while it will tend at the same time to the happiness of your lives while carrying it out and putting it into execution. I repeat to you again, said I to them, that my plan is based on extra labour, that you must consider none (day or night) too great for you to perform, remembering at the same time that

it is not to be accomplished in a day, but will require years of perseverance in well doing to effect it. On my part, you may depend on my prudence, not to involve myself by speculation or otherwise, (with the Divine blessing,) so as to put it out of my power to carry out the agreement; and I will take care by keeping regular accounts of all your gains, and by instructions to my executors, in my last will and testament, (should it please Him, in whose hands all things are, to take me from life before the full accomplishment of the scheme,) to have our agreement truly and fully executed, and justice rendered you, by selling you out as servants for a time, and then, (after the expiration of your term of service,) seeing that you and your children are sent out to Liberia. To all this, they (the whole of the adults, men and women,) no youth or child was present, lent an attentive ear; and again, with eyes streaming with tears, assured me of their full determination to devote their days and nights to the honour of God, the happiness of their children, and the carrying out the plan I had devised for their benefit. It now remains for me to state the results of the experiment. In less than six years the first half day was gained and paid for by them. In about four years, the next, or second day of the week, was paid for and their own. In about two and a quarter years, the next, or third day, was paid for and made their own. In about fifteen months, the next, or fourth day, was theirs. In about a year, the next, or fifth day, was gained and paid for; and in about six months, the last or sixth day of the week, became their own, and completed the purchase—effecting their freedom in about fourteen and a half years. After this,

it took them somewhere about five months to labour to pay the balance due on their children, added to what the youths (boys and girls) had earned. If there appears any discrepancy in the period in which they effected the purchase of the different days for themselves, it is to be accounted for in their drawing more money at one period than at another, as they frequently did towards the last, after they had accomplished the purchase of two or three days, or their freedom would have been sooner accomplished. This took place (the effecting of their freedom) in August, 1840, nearly two years since; at which time they would have taken their departure for Liberia, but as the Abolitionists of the Northern and Eastern States of our Union had occasioned much excitement in our State, not only among the owners of slaves, but among the slaves themselves, I did not consider it safe, or myself at liberty, (howeversomuch I desired it) as there was a considerable black population in the immediate neighbourhood of those my black people, to send them away. I therefore told them, (without giving them the cause,) that they must be satisfied to remain where they were until the proper time for their departure should arrive, with which they remained satisfied. So that they effected their freedom, as above stated, in about fourteen years and a half; and the assertion I made in your Gazette of the 24th of June last, 'that the act of sending those people away is, in my case, one of simple honesty alone,' is explained in my having received in money from them, (or the equivalent of money,) the full price agreed on between us, for their freedom in Liberia. Some persons, Messrs. Editors, may now, perhaps, be disposed to say, why proceed in this roundabout way, this giving the

one-half of Saturday, this keeping of accounts, this purchasing of day after day, &c. &c.—it is all unnecessary, and their working to gain their time an illusion —that the whole of the time of the slave belongs to and is the time of the master—that the master can compel his labour, without freeing his slave, &c. I admit the truth of the latter part of the assertion, that the time and labour of the slave belongs of right to the master, but deny that the first is illusory, as respects either one or the other, the master or his slave; for it is founded in the moral constitution of man. Without hope, a certain something in the future for him to look forward and aspire to, man would be nothing. Deprive him of that inspiriting faculty of soul, and he would grovel in the dust as the brute. But, say they, why not promise him at once, freedom after fifteen year's service? To this I have many and strong objections. In that mode his freedom would appear the gift of his master, who might repent and retract (as the slave would fear) of his promise. In the other mode, the slave would have gained it—have purchased and paid his master for it. Hope would be kept alive in his bosom—he would have a goal in view, continually urging him on to faithfulness, fidelity, truth, industry, economy, and every virtue and good work. The observations of a great and good man, (with whom I was in correspondence,) made to me in one of his letters some years since, to whom I had faintly intimated the plan I was pursuing with my people, are so descriptive of their then situation, feeling, and conduct, that I will give an extract from it. 'Your plan, dear Sir, as I infer from what you have intimated to me, calls into action a higher and nobler motive than servile fear. It holds

out a reward to the obedient and faithful. Such a motive can seldom fail. It is the impulsive cause of all good conduct; hence we find it holding a conspicuous place in that system of government which the Almighty exercised over the ancient Israelites; 'If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.' And the same motive to Christian conduct, is presented under the Christian dispensation; 'Be thou faithful until death, and I will give thee a crown of life.'' From the foregoing summary it will be seen that the basis of my plan for their success and government, was RELIGION —a desire to awaken in their bosoms the love of the Divinity. Hope and trust in Him, once born in their souls, would produce its fruit—a determination to obedience, labour, order, economy, and all good works. That such was the result, and was the impulsive cause of their true and faithful conduct, is shown. Its effects on the interest of their master, his happiness, and their own happiness, is also seen and shown. They have now sailed for Liberia, the land of their fathers; and I can say, with truth and heartfelt satisfaction, that a more virtuous people do not exist in any community; and I pray the Most High to continue unto them the blessings which he never ceased to shower down on their heads whilst under my roof.

I will further observe, that from the day on which I made the agreement with them, (notwithstanding they had, at all times previous thereto, been a well-disposed and orderly people,) an entire change appeared to come over them; they were no longer apparently the same people; a sedateness, a care, an economy, an industry, took possession of them, to which there seemed to be no bounds, but in their physical strength. They were

never tired of labouring, and seemed as though they could never effect enough. They became temperate, moral, religious, setting an example of innocent and unoffending lives to the world around them, which was seen and admired by all. The result of my experiment, in a pecuniary point of view, as relates to myself, is not one of the least surprising of its features, and is this, that in the space of about sixteen years, which those people served me, since making the agreement with them, they have gained for me, in addition to having performed more and better labour than slaves ordinarily perform in the usual time of labouring, a sum of money, (including the sum they appear to have paid me in the purchase of their time,) which will enable me to go to Virginia or Carolina, and purchase a gang of people of nearly double the number of those I have sent away. This I state from an account kept by me, showing the amount and nature of their extra work and labour, which I am ready to attest to, in the most solemn manner, at any time.

Previous to entering into the agreement with those people, I calculated (and my estimate and calculation have been fully realized, and more than realized to me in the result) that their labour would be given with all the energy of heart, soul, and physical powers; that they would, in consequence, accomplish more labour in a given time than the same number of people would in ordinary circumstances; and that, in addition, they would labour some two, three, or four hours, morning and night, in the twenty-four hours of the day, more than other slaves were in the habit of doing, or would do. To set forth and show the spirit that actuated and filled their souls (in relation to their worldly concerns) during the whole

time they were operating under this agreement, I will state in the sequel to this some circumstances known here to hundreds of our most respectable citizens.

If the planters of Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas, whose lands are worn out, would entrust their slaves to the younger male branches of their families, to bring here into our State, to cultivate the richest alluvial soils in the world, they would be enabled, (under such an agreement with their slaves as I have pointed out above,) every fifteen years, (after gaining by their extra labour, the value of their entire gangs, making large revenues, and passing happy lives; for I can say with great truth, that the last sixteen years of mine, passed as they have been in peace and without anxiety, in the midst of those people, have been among the most happy of my life; for the very knowledge that I was surrounded by those who looked upon me in the light of a friend and a father, and who would willingly at any time have perilled their own lives to have saved mine, if necessary, gave peace and serenity to the mind,) to send their entire gangs to Liberia without the cost of a dollar to themselves. Besides which, to bring their slaves into this State, and keep them here fifteen years, would be an act of humanity, as it would inure them to a climate very analogous to that of Africa, and they would run no risk to their health or lives when afterwards settling in Liberia. I will now state that, to carry out this plan with complete success, it is all-important that the slave has full and entire confidence in his master; he must know and be convinced that his master is his friend and well-wisher; that he is true, sincere, and honest: without this confidence of the slave in his master, I at once confess the plan could not be carried

out with success. It would be in vain for a master to attempt it whose character was known for duplicity, untruth, dishonesty, cruelty, &c. &c.; he would not succeed in it, for no one is better acquainted with the character of the master than the slave himself. To insure the success of the plan in all its parts, I will say also to such masters as feel an interest in the happiness of their black people, and will attempt to execute and carry it out, neglect not religious instruction to your people, for religion must be combined with the plan, and walk hand in hand with it. To encourage them in the execution and carrying out of their engagement, I showed them every six months, or twice a year, their accounts on my books, and informed them of its state, their success, and the sum of money they had gained, and which was in my hands, standing to the credit of their accounts. This proceeding on my part appeared to instil, as it were, new life into them, to afford them great satisfaction; it was a proof also to them of the interest I took and felt in their affairs. The legislatures of our different slave States might, by the enactment of laws on the subject, greatly assist and protect the interest of the slave. (I do not mean by forcing the master to make such arrangements, or to come to such an understanding with their slaves;) but in the event of misfortune or bankruptcy in the master or mistress, whose slaves had been working under such an arrangement made with them, that the master or mistress might be permitted to prove, on his or her oath, in a court of justice, that such an agreement existed between him, or her, and their slaves; and that they (the slaves) had been working under said agreement for such or such a length of time; that such a sum of money had been gained by them towards their

freedom, &c. &c. By which means the slaves (if seized for debt) could only be sold for a certain time (of sufficient duration, after a legal estimation) for the liquidating the balance due from them (the slaves) on themselves; well understood that such enactments should be made by the different legislatures, under the express condition that the slaves were not to remain in the United States, but to remove, or to be removed, to Liberia, in Africa, so soon as the time of service, for which they were sold, should have expired. If, on the other hand, the master or mistress of slaves, who had of their own free will entered into such an agreement with their slaves, should die previous to the slaves having acquired the right to emigrate to Liberia, under the agreement they had made to labour for their freedom, the slaves should be protected by law, and permitted to prove in a court of justice, by one or more disinterested white witnesses, (who had heard it from the mouth of the master or mistress of the slaves,) the amount they had already gained under the agreement, and they should then be sold as servants for time, to pay the balance due from them, the said slaves, and then forced to emigrate to Liberia.

I will now say a few words relative to my general mode of treating those people. They were lodged in warm and comfortable houses, fed with good salt provisions and corn bread, with a plenty of garden vegetables cooked with pork, clothed with durable clothing according to the season; a ration of molasses and one of salt was allowed them weekly, and a little coffee and common tea every six months; Christmas and New-Year's presents served to supply their little wants, and enable them to leave nearly everything arising from

their own labour untouched in my hands. They kept hogs and fowls of their own, and cultivated what ground they needed in corn and vegetables. In sickness, I had as good care taken of them as of myself, with good nurses to attend them. When they committed or were charged with offences, I did not order an arbitrary punishment, but had them tried by their peers. I would summon a jury of five or six of the principal men, say to them such a man or such a woman is charged with such or such an offence, the witnesses I am told are such and such persons—summon them, hold your court, have him tried, and report to me your judgment and punishment to be inflicted. It was done all in due form (the court-room was the church); the trial took place, and the person acquitted or condemned; the punishment awarded (if condemned and found guilty) was reported to me, and I generally found it necessary to modify it in reference to leniency. If twenty lashes was awarded, I would say to the judges, who were the executors of the sentence, give ten lashes, and a moral lecture to the culprit, for the offence. It was done, the criminal acknowledged the justice of the punishment, promised better things for the future, and forgot not to be grateful to the master who had reduced the degree of punishment, and reinstated him in place and favour.

For upwards of twenty years I have had no white man over them as an overseer; one of themselves was their manager or commander, who conducted, directed, and managed the others; nor would I myself have the time once in six months to see in person what they were doing, though the commander would report to me nightly what he had done through the day, and receive my instructions for the day following. They were be-

sides my men of business, enjoyed my confidence, were my clerks, transacted all my affairs, made purchases of materials, collected my rents, leased my houses, took care of my property and effects of every kind, and that with honesty and fidelity, which was a proof against every temptation. As I promised to state in the sequel some circumstances that would go to show the spirit that animated and filled their souls, in executing and carrying out the agreement they had entered into with their master, and in what extra labour I have spoken of was performed by them, I have now to observe, that I have been looked on generally by the French planters, on the opposite side of the river to New Orleans, (where I reside,) as if not a very cruel, at least a very severe master, one who works his people late and early, (for the whip was seldom or ever heard on my plantation—never, indeed, except to uphold and support good order and morality.) Some years since, a gentleman from one of the Eastern States, a friend of mine, met me in the street of New Orleans on a Monday, and on stopping me, began to smile, saying that he had passed the day previous (the Sabbath) in the country, a few leagues above my residence, on the right bank of the Mississippi, at the house of a rich sugar planter, who had given a party in honour of his arrival, and where he had met at dinner some twenty or thirty French gentlemen (principally sugar planters of that side of the river) and their ladies; that at dinner the conversation turned on planting, crops, slavery, &c. &c., and he was asked what was generally thought by the inhabitants of the Eastern and Northern States, of the inhabitants of the South of the Union, the slaveholders. The gentleman replied, among other observations, that the French planters of Louisiana were looked upon

generally by the Americans of the north as very severe, and even cruel masters, in the treatment of their slaves, much more so even than the planters of Louisiana of English ancestry. This brought from the gentlemen at table an assertion that some of the most severe masters of the State were to be found among the Anglo-Americans, (a term by which all Americans and strangers generally are called by the natives of Louisiana of French descent,) and, as an instance, they cited you, mentioning your name as one who obliged his people to work until midnight, and one and two o'clock in the morning, and for the truth of the assertion they appealed to one another, when it was confirmed by them generally, both ladies and gentlemen, that they had known your black people often and often to have been at work (as they had seen them with their own eyes) until that late hour of the night and morning, adding, that it was known to be a common thing with them to work late and early. The gentleman observed to the company, as he informed me, that the circumstance surprised and astonished him much—knowing me as he did, he had not supposed me capable of treating my people with such severity, &c. &c.—they again assured him of the fact, and appealed to every inhabitant of the country between that and my residence, for its truth.—Now, says my friend, the gentleman in question to me, I merely mention those things to you—I do not inquire as to the truth of it, because I am convinced there is some mistake about it, something about it I do not understand. To this I observed, smiling, Not so fast, my friend—all that those ladies and gentlemen asserted, is true, and they had seen, as they informed you, with their own eyes, my people at work, often and often, at the

hours they mentioned to you, but did they tell you at the same time, that they never saw them at work, but they were as merry as crickets, singing and joyful, making the whole neighbourhood vocal with their happiness; because had they told you that, which would have been nothing but the truth, it would no doubt have convinced you, that there was no compulsion in their labouring. The only part of assertion of those ladies and gentlemen which was incorrect, was that wherein they observed, that I obliged my slaves to work until midnight, and one and two o'clock in the morning. They are often working, I confess, until these hours; but I do not force them to work—it is of their own free will and accord. Then, observed the gentleman, you must pay them, I presume. I do not say, said I to him, what I do, further than that there is no compulsion in their labouring; but I promise, that you shall know the story one day, if I am spared, (which he will, as I shall send him a copy of this.) We then separated, but I found the gentleman, I confess, very incredulous, (notwithstanding he knew something of my character,) as to slaves working of their own accord, without compulsion from their master. The story is this; my residence is on the opposite side of the river Mississippi, immediately in front of the city of New Orleans; the steam ferry, which runs from one side of the river to the other, lands a short distance below my house. The French ladies and gentlemen residing above my house, on the right bank of the river, being very fond of balls and theatres, were in consequence, in the constant habit of passing and repassing my house, to and from the city of New Orleans in their carriages, at all hours of the night and morning. Immediately below, and adjoining my residence, I had

extensive establishments for the making of brick, engaged in working in which, those ladies and gentlemen saw, with their own eyes, often my people, at the hours they mentioned, which explains why they considered me a severe master. I have to observe, that I was in the habit of never retiring to rest at night, until seeing my commander, and knowing that my people had come in from their work, (for I have laboured myself day and night, through a long life, and shall still continue so to do, to its close,) and often and often, when the clock would strike ten and eleven, I would say to a servant of the house, (not having seen the commander,) Have the people come in from their work? And he would reply, No, sir, I see bonfires in the brick-yard, they have not yet finished their work. I would then say to him, Go out and ask the commander what keeps him out so late? when he would return to me, saying—Sir, the commander says there is some thirty or forty thousand bricks out, the weather looks like rain, and he must get them in to save them, or they will be lost. Satisfied with this statement, I have waited until midnight, and sent out again; the same answer returned; again, at one o'clock in the morning; same answer; they singing the whole time, that they might be heard over the neighbourhood. At two o'clock I have sent out to him with positive orders to break off work, and bring his people in, even if the bricks should be lost—that I would not permit them to work any longer. When in would come the commander, (and likely not at all pleased,) saying, Sir, if you had let us go on an hour or two longer, we should have saved all our brick, which I fear we shall lose. When I have had to console him by telling him, you cannot work all night — it is very

late now—the people must have rest. This will serve to show how the spirit worked within them; and after retiring to bed and rest, I have known them hundreds of times, on an appearance of rain, to arise and go out to work at all hours of the night and morning. I will now give another instance, (I could relate hundreds,) going to show the effect of that hope, that charm of man's existence, 'liberty,' on the life and actions of those people. Some years since, some twenty or thirty of those people were engaged in erecting some extensive brick warehouses on Julia-street, in New Orleans, (for they were excellent mechanics of various trades, and were in the habit of making brick, purchasing shells and burning lime, sawing timber, and then taking the materials when made, and building them up into fine houses on both sides of the river, for their master,) near to the residence of Edward E. Parker, Esq., one of our most wealthy and respectable citizens, a gentleman who was in the habit of building very extensively himself in the city. Meeting Mr. Parker on a certain day in the street of New Orleans, I was accosted, and asked whether I would sell him a certain black man, named Jim or James, (having several men of that name, I inquired which James,) when he observed, the one who was at the head of the bricklayers, who were erecting those warehouses on Julia-street, near to his, Mr. Parker's residence. I replied to him, no; that I was not in the habit of selling people; that I purchased occasionally but never sold. Mr. Parker then observed, that he wished I would depart in the present instance from my general rule and agree to sell him that man; that he was very desirous of possessing him; that as he was erecting several buildings, the man would suit him, and that he

would give a good price for him. I again said to him that the man was not for sale, and was about to leave him, when he observed, Could you not be tempted, sir, to sell him? I will give you 2500 dollars for him, in cash. I told Mr. Parker it did not tempt me, and we separated. A week or two thereafter, I met Mr. Parker again, and was again accosted on the same subject, with Do, Mr. M'Donogh, sell me that man; I will give you 3000 dollars for him. Again I made him the same answer, that he was not for sale. Again and again we met in the streets, and each time the same request, by raising the offer of price at each interview, until at last, Mr. Parker informed me that he would pay me 5000 dollars in cash for him. Feeling at length a little vexed at these repeated demands, I said to Mr. Parker, though you are a very rich man, sir, your whole fortune could not purchase that man, (not that he is worth it, or worth more than any other man,) or any of the others; but because he is not to be sold. Mr. Parker, finding at length, from the refusal of such a large sum of money for him, that there was no hopes of obtaining him, observed to me, Well, then, Mr. M'Donogh, seeing now that you will not sell him at any price, tell me what kind of people are those of yours? To which I replied, How so, Mr. Parker, I suppose they are like other men; flesh and blood, like you and myself; when he replied, Why, sir, I have never seen such people; building as they are next door to my residence, I see, and have my eye on them from morning till night. You are never there, for I have never met you, or seen you once at the building; tell me, sir, said he, where do those people of yours live; do they cross the river morning and night?

I informed him that they lived on the opposite side of the river, where I live myself, and crossed it to their work, when working in New Orleans, night and morning, except when stormy, (which happened very seldom,) when I did not permit them to cross it, to endanger their lives: at such time they remained at home, or in the city. Why, sir, said he, I am an early riser, getting up before day; and do you think that I am not awoke every morning of my life by the noise of their trowels at work, and their singing and noise, before day; and do you suppose, sir, that they stop or leave off work at sun-down? no, sir; but they work as long as they can see to lay brick, and then carry up brick and mortar, for an hour or two afterwards, to be a-head of their work the next morning. And again, sir, do you think they walk at their work? no, sir; they run all day. You see, sir, said he, those immensely long ladders, five stories in height; do you suppose they walk up them? no, sir; they run up and down them like monkeys, the whole day long. I never saw such people as those, sir; I do not know what to make of them; was there a white man over them with a whip in his hand all day, why then I should see and understand the cause of their running, and incessant labour; but I cannot comprehend it, sir; there is something in it, sir—there is something in it. Great man, sir, that Jim—great man, sir—should like to own him, sir, should like to own him. After having laughed very heartily, at the observations of Mr. Parker, for it was all truth, every word of it, I informed him that there was a secret about it, which I would disclose to him some day, and we separated. Now, Mr. Parker imputed the conduct of these people (for I have given

the very words and expressions he used, and he is alive, hearty and well, in New Orleans, and can be spoken to by any one interested in the subject) to the head man who conducted them, and in consequence, impressed with that belief, offered me 5000 dollars for him; but Mr. Parker knew not the stimulus that acted on the heart of each, and every one of them; that it was the whole body of them that moved together as one mind; not one alone, the head man, as he supposed. In closing this statement, I will say a few words to show what the attachment of people similarly situated (slaves) will be to a master who treats them justly. The ship on which they sailed for Africa, laid opposite my house, in the Mississippi, at the bank of the river; I had taken my leave of them on going on board the ship, on Friday evening, the day previous to her sailing, in my house. The scene which then took place I will not attempt to describe—it can never be erased from my memory. Though standing in need, on the occasion, of consolation myself, (in bidding a last farewell on earth, to those who had so many claims on my affection, and who had been round and about me for such a long series of years,) I had to administer it to them, who stood in the greater need of it. To tell them that the separation was but a brief period of time—that we should meet again, I trusted, in a better and happier state—to charge them to gird up their loins, and play the man valiantly, in their determination to enter into their own Canaan, and to remember that there was still another and final separation from all things earthly, which they had to sustain and encounter—to meet, and be prepared for which, they must persevere in well-doing to the end—that their

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